

# RENASSANCE

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# Criticism and Belief: The Life of the Catholic Critic

by Thomas P. McDonnell

IT SHOULD be pointed out at once that the word *life* in the sub-title has nothing whatever to do with anyone's biography, or with that commercialized feeling of zest and artificial well-being which seems to be the main ingredient of the advertiser's potion. Rather, I mean an essence (as yet undefined), a constant and inner quality of elan that motivates the critical faculties toward a just and "sympathetic" evaluation of the art-work under consideration. Now this may sound somewhat abstract, perhaps even stuffy, but I hope very shortly to come down to a more demonstrative and practical level; and a good way to begin is to define what the act of criticism is not. It is not, first of all, a temporary attitude to be taken off and put on again, like a coat, before going in and out of doors. Further, it is not an act of mere propaganda automatically dispensed from a preconceived and arbitrary point of view. For it is pre-eminently true (although the contrary is too often the fact) that, of all critics, the Catholic critic can least afford a narrow or limited view either of life or of literature, or of those places in art where they virtually become one. But this last point should be kept well in mind, when we later consider the fallacy (so often committed) of separating literature from life itself.

We shall, of course, gain nothing but self-deception among ourselves and professional disrespect among others, if we blink to the fact that Catholic literary criticism (indeed, if such a body of work can be said to exist) is something less than its name fully implies. I mean that we too often carp and condemn on moral grounds alone, and therefore pre-empt the primacy of the critical act itself; in other words, instead of exploring a work of literature with sympathy and insight, we moralize upon it. A case in point is that of Ernest Hemingway, whose work has hardly been more than superficially examined by the majority of Catholic critics who have written about him. When we do not approach works of literature through moralizing about them, we apply to them the utilitarian function of mere propaganda. And a case in this particular point may be that of Edith Sitwell, who, *before* her official conversion to the Church, was conspicuously absent from the critical consideration of even the most highly regarded of our periodicals, although several exceptions may be gratefully noted; yet after her conversion she was copiously treated, even though her poetry remained substantially the same. But I do not intend here to dwell upon Hemingway and Dame Edith or to make them the burden of this essay; I mention them simply to indicate the two main directions of Catholic

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literary criticism today, to say nothing of their several offshoots. In fact, there is much more to be gained by considering what Catholic criticism *ought* to be than by bemoaning its present deficiencies; it is important to consider the nature and quality of true literary criticism, and especially to define that life-giving atmosphere of freedom and charity without which the critical faculties cannot properly function.

Speaking as I was a moment ago about offshoots, I should like now to indulge in a brief but necessary diversion, which, it is hoped, will lead back into a consideration of the relationship between criticism and the problem of belief. At a dinner for Henry Rago, editor of *Poetry*, I heard a remarkably profound comment having to do with the problem at hand, made by Herbert Kenny, a Boston newspaperman and poet, in conversation with Rago. Kenny said that you have to take your absolutes from some particular point or level, and that if you take them from a basically theological level (since theology is the fundamental and logical place from which to start), then you can range infinitely upward in complete freedom; whereas if you take them, for example, from a political or an economical or a scientific level, you will invariably assume the rigidities of these categories and that consequently will limit your freedom of range in thinking about them and their relationships to other kinds of knowledge. In other words, if you take your absolutes at, say, the scientific level, the inevitable result, of course, will be *scientism*. The contra-distinction, however, should be made that although scientific research operates within its own rightful autonomy, the freedom to do so does not derive *from* science, but from that truth which is the center and circumference of theology. My purpose in mentioning this theory of the absolute is to apply its principle to certain methods or attitudes of criticism. I should like further to personify these two attitudes of criticism with two specific critics—the one who takes his absolutes from his own system of literary criticism and the other whose criticism evolves from (but is not involved in) a theological orientation. The first is the contemporary American critic Yvor Winters; and the second, the French critic Charles Du Bos.

IT HAS always seemed to me something of an oversight on the part of Catholic letters that the work of Yvor Winters, at least those parts of it which could be valuably retained, has not been assimilated into a Christian critique of literature. For perhaps more than any other modern critic he has insisted upon the moral evaluation of literature—although, it should be pointed out, he has not always been consistent in what he means by "moral." But he has, almost alone, insisted upon the rational content of poetry and the use of "language in such a manner as to communicate the emotion which ought to be communicated by that rational understanding of the particular subject" (*The*

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*Function of Criticism*). The work will thus become "a complete moral judgment in so far as the work is successful." He has also insisted that "the spiritual control in a poem, then, is simply a manifestation of the spiritual control within the poet . . ." Further, he conceives "poetry as a technique of contemplation, of comprehension, a technique which does not eliminate the need of philosophy or religion, but which, rather completes and enriches them." Yvor Winters has written cogently and impressively on those theories of literature which he has classified as the *didactic*, the *hedonistic*, the *romantic*, and his own, which for lack of a better term he calls the *moralistic*. On the surface, then, his work in this regard would certainly seem to favor the view of Christian morality and reason in criticism. Further, though not himself a Catholic, he has more than once professed great admiration for Thomas Aquinas: "The writings of Aquinas," he says in the above mentioned book, "have latent in them the most profound and intense experiences of our race." And so it would surely appear that of all modern critics of literature, Yvor Winters would be the ideal one—indeed, if such a creature could be said to exist.

But such is not the case; for despite the moral dimension that he has added to a modern criticism peculiarly lacking in that direction, Yvor Winters has taken his absolutes so exclusively from the critical (actually categorical) level as to render his conclusions almost moribund. For example, his definition of a poem, which he never seems to tire of repeating, I consider admirable, and generally but not exclusively true; its universal application in the criticism of poetry would automatically eliminate from our experience a considerable body of authentic poems—poems that are distinguished for their sense of the mysterious, the magical, the passionate, and especially for that intuitive searching of the human spirit which refuses the confinement of a definition. And so it does not seem to me correct, or even possible, to force a totally rational and moral judgment on every poem, although I should agree with Winters that most of the best poems (or at least the ones I happen to like best) are written in that particular way. But I object to excluding any and every other possible way; besides, it seems to me that the Muse will invariably shy away from any poet who tries to force her into perpetual argument. Yvor Winters is equally adamant in his classifications of literature. For example, his theory of romanticism, although highly reasonable and commendable in itself, paradoxically puts Winters in the position of being actually incapable of dealing with the so-called romantic writers. He cannot, in other words, discover any human "truth" in, say, D. H. Lawrence's "carnal messianism" or relate it to any total (or at least completer) view; he can only condemn Lawrence *in toto*. Therefore, I submit that even so fine a critic as Yvor Winters, because he has taken his absolutes from a limited and arbitrary level, thus obtains to that arrogant rigidity which can only prove fatal to the free search for truth.

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CHARLES DU BOS, on the other hand, is that critic *par excellence*, "who is the model of a critique which is both free and true." I take my quotation from Abbé Charles Moeller of the University of Louvain, perhaps the foremost interpreter in English of Du Bos; in fact, there is so very little of Du Bos available in English that I am quite compelled to rely almost exclusively on Moeller's fine presentation of him in *Truth and Freedom*, published in 1954 by Duquesne University. (It is not in the least exaggerated to say that if the Abbé Moeller's "Freedom and Truth in Literary Critique" were taken seriously to heart and put into practice, it would have an effect on Catholic criticism much like that exercised by Emerson's "The American Scholar" on the early intellectual climate of our own country). I said earlier that the criticism of Charles Du Bos takes its absolutes from the theological level, and I should now like to emphasize that point by stating, however briefly, his proposition of the soul, i.e., the discovering and revealing of the *soul* within (and which animates) the particular work of literature. Indeed, the word "soul" has become so shopworn in our English tongue, and its meaning so generally debased, that I should much prefer to use the more lively and meaningful word *anima*. But it is the point from which Charles Du Bos always begins, allowing himself an infinite (so to speak) range of freedom in which to discover the particular "truth" and to integrate it into a greater view of life than it ordinarily would have in its own isolation. Now this is not to make the work of criticism greater than the work of art which it considers, but simply to extend the range of criticism itself, and by so doing, extend our knowledge and appreciation of the particular work of literature. For as Moeller says, "Religion does not curtail the width of horizon, but broadens it. It is important to repeat once more that according to Du Bos, ". . . religion *enriches* the vision of the literary world, because it adds supplementary categories of thought, new 'geometric dimensions' in depth, the dimension of grace at the top, and that of sin at the bottom. Religion gives an *increase* of light, not a *decrease*. There is no trace in it of 'ideology' or 'spirituality' in the sense of tyranny over thought and man." This last is extremely important, because it insists on the primacy of the act of criticism, and will not subordinate it to a mere theological or "moralizing" invasion of literature. On the other hand, the relationship between the two cannot be utterly ignored. Modern criticism in English shows the results of such disregard; for an age that has specialized in the psychological approach to criticism, the analytical, the categorical, the biographical, the symbolical, and so forth, has left an enormous emptiness in relating literature to a truly comprehensive and Christian interpretation. And I do not mean something vague called the Western tradition; I mean Christian theology *per se*. It might be objected that T. S. Eliot, for one, has not forsaken the Christian view of literature in his criticism; but it must also be added that he

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has not struck at the heart of the matter in any degree comparable to that of Charles Du Bos.

Having said this much, I believe that the comparison between the critical orientations of Yvor Winters and Charles Du Bos may now become apparent and distinct with only the briefest summaries of their critical methods. Here, then, is Winters in *The Anatomy of Nonsense*:

It will consist (1) of the statement of such historical or biographical knowledge as may be necessary in order to understand the mind and method of the writer; (2) of such analysis of his literary theories as we may need to understand and evaluate what he is doing; (3) of a rational critique of the paraphrasable content (roughly, the motive) of the poem; (4) of a rational critique of the feeling motivated—that is, of the details of style, as seen in language and technique; and (5) of the final act of judgment, a unique act, the general nature of which can be indicated, but which cannot be communicated precisely, since it consists in receiving from the poet his own final and unique judgment of his matter and in judging that judgment. It should be noted that the purpose of the first four processes is to limit as narrowly as possible the region in which the final unique act is to occur.

And now Charles Moeller on Du Bos, as in the essay mentioned earlier:

The literary judgment proceeds rather by way of attempts to integrate partial truths into the bosom of a more comprehensive truth which is not vague and abstract but concrete because it is artistic, i.e., "incarnated." Accordingly, the order of steps to be taken by the literary critic—an order which is as necessary as it is harmonious—is: a) to *discover* and express the truth of the literary masterpiece; b) to *situate* it by comparing it with other works; c) and finally to judge it by *integrating* it into a complete view of man. The essential factor of this "judgment" is to discover an "hypothesis" which permits the integration of the largest number of possible facts, somewhat in the way it is done in science, in which "laws" by increasingly more accurate approximations attempt to incorporate partial observations into the bosom of an "order."

The similarities between the two statements are, of course, rather obvious—especially in those aspects which have to do with literary judgment and artistic comparisons. But so granting, I think it is sufficient to say, without great elaboration, that the differences make all the difference—that the one (however reasonable as far as it goes) is a closet, academic, vacuumized criticism; whereas the other is open and free and on the side of life.

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IT IS, in closing, of the "insoluble bonds" between life and literature that I now wish to speak, and of the fallacy mentioned early in this essay, of separating the one from the other. Du Bos never entertained the silly notion, as so many do, that a great masterpiece of literature is, after all, only a book. On the contrary, he thought that life and literature are necessarily dependent upon one another; that literature's need of life was self-evident, but that life without literature would be an intolerable waterfall of mere sensation. In fact, Du Bos defined literature, in a few words, perhaps more magnificently and more profoundly than it has ever before been defined. He said simply: "Literature is life becoming conscious of itself." And this, above all, is what the Christian critic must come at last to realize; but he must realize it with his whole being, until its full implication and application become as the very air he breathes. And if he does this, he will not have to banish any narrow-mindedness from his criticism, because narrow-mindedness itself will be incapable of existing within him. He will not approach a work of art with preconceived notions and prejudices, but he will "*put on* the soul of its author in order to penetrate into his universe from within"; and in so doing, he will exercise "*that charity of intellect* which goes to the encounter of every human truth . . ." And if I may further echo the Abbé Moeller, the touchstone of a free critique, therefore, cannot be a contrived ideology or a system only (however skilfully detailed in its structure); but must emanate from "the presence or absence of the soul in the work, the soul in all its dimensions . . . Du Bos' critique is the unsurpassed model in this respect, because of the supreme ease it displays, because of the fervor, the warm-heartedness, with which it animates whatever it touches, to the point of making even the blackest and most opaque rocks of *unbelief* yield . . ." such sparks of truth as they may contain within themselves.

It is, therefore, not at all strange, or even paradoxical, that the critic (Yvor Winters), who perhaps more than most has extolled the primacy and use of reason in literary art, should himself become in many respects the most unreasonable, and in assuming the position of self-absolutist, should become merely dogmatic in the narrowest sense; and that the critic (Charles Du Bos), who is perhaps more theologically centered than any other, should become the one most free and reasonable and comprehensive.

# Penelope Aubin: Forgotten Catholic Novelist

By Roger B. Dooley

TO US who, more than a century after the Oxford Movement, have so long taken for granted its fruits in the Catholic revival as a natural part of our heritage that we readily turn to England for some of the best examples of Catholic writing in every form, the religious situation in the England of two centuries ago may seem well nigh incredible. To be sure, we have all heard of the Penal Laws, not fully abolished until the Emancipation Act of 1829, under which the tiny minority of English Catholics (about one per cent of the population) were barred from Parliament, from the universities, the armed services, and the learned professions; but perhaps less generally known is the full extent to which the anti-Papery of the day affected every branch of English literature.

Venomous attacks were by no means confined to Grub Street hacks, paid to grind out pamphlets with titles like *Papery and Slavery Displayed*. Indeed, it would be difficult to find any writer of the eighteenth century, major or minor, poet or historian, Whig or Tory, from Dean Swift to Monk Lewis, whose works do not at some point show traces of anti-Catholic indoctrination. Whatever their attitudes in private social relationships, this seemed a taboo which seldom, if ever, permitted relaxation when writing for publication.

Of the four traditional founders of the novel, only Richardson refrained from any fictional attacks on Catholics. In *Sir Charles Grandison*, in fact, he even introduced two Italian priests meant as sympathetic characters. The beloved Fielding, epitome of the good-natured Englishman of his day, ignored Catholics in his novels altogether, to be sure, but his farce of 1732, *The Old Debauchees, or the Jesuit Caught* was so rich in jibes at every possible Catholic practice that Drury Lane revived it for pure propaganda purposes during Bonnie Prince Charlie's ill-fated venture of 1745, at which time Fielding himself was editing the virulently anti-Papist periodical, *The True Patriot*. Smollett's Capuchins in *Roderick Random* and *Peregrine Pickle* remain among the most repulsive characters ever created by a writer well known for his grotesque types. Sterne's ubiquitous, often indecent, ridicule of Romanism in *Tristram Shandy* must surely shock any Catholic reader who comes to it unprepared, nor is it balanced by the briefly seen Franciscan friar in *A Sentimental Journey*. Even Defoe, most illustrious predecessor of the above four and undoubtedly more tolerant than any, though he introduced some admirable Catholic mis-

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sionaries in *Robinson Crusoe* (with many an apology and protest of veracity), also drew the despicable Irish "clerico," Murtough Brennan, in *Captain Carleton*.

But before condemning these writers for personal bigotry, it should be recalled that to the eighteenth-century Englishman the word "Papist" had exactly the same connotations as the word "Communist" to present-day Americans, and for parallel reasons, however ill-founded in fact. One could hardly have reacted otherwise who had been educated from earliest childhood to consider the Reformation as the greatest blessing in English history, with press and pulpit, both controlled by the government, endlessly reviewing the persecutions under Bloody Mary, the St. Bartholomew's Massacre, supposed Jesuit conspiracies against Elizabeth, the Gunpowder Plot of 1605 and the Popish Plot of 1679, the horrors of the Spanish Inquisition, and all the rest.

As a threat to British liberty, Stuart absolutism or the Jacobite cause, with which Catholicism was invariably identified, was actually a dead dog after 1715, but this did not keep a large number of Anglican clergymen from reviving it regularly in order to beat it all over again. Considering the insignificant number and position of Catholics in England at this time, it seems hardly possible that otherwise rational men could have felt the deep alarm which they frequently voiced in public. No doubt as many ambitious preachers made their names by this sure-fire means as rising politicians have done in our time by well-publicized repetitions of familiar anti-Red charges.

The parallel in position (though hardly in purpose) between eighteenth-century Catholics and twentieth-century Communists seems inescapable. The Catholics, too, were considered fanatic tools of an international conspiracy, whose first loyalty was to a foreign tyrant, and whose oaths of allegiance could not be believed (since they were taught not to keep faith with heretics). The Catholic nations of Europe were regarded as suspiciously as so many satellite countries already behind the Iron Curtain, and atrocity stories of the sufferings of Protestants within their borders stirred as much sympathy as present-day accounts of brain-washing and underground resistance. Those who showed even the faintest doubts of all this were at once labeled "secret Papists," the equivalent of crypto-Communists or fellow travelers. The ultimate charge against any form of high-handedness in the Church of England was simply to brand it "Popery."

Small wonder, then, that the average novelist, who just as in our own day lived by pleasing the public, not by trying to reform it, was content to follow obediently where his (or more often, *her*) acknowledged betters had repeatedly pointed the way. Since by mid-century most readers and a large number of writers were women, anti-Popery was less likely to take the coarse forms of Smollett and Sterne than to follow a daintier variation inspired by Marivaux in his *Vie de Marianne*. Out of the many-volumed sagas of suffering sensibility

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with which these long-forgotten Elizas, Annes, Charlottes, and Marias supplied the circulating library trade, a whole religious community might well be made up of genteel Protestant heroines tricked by some Popish villain into a French convent and relentlessly urged by some smooth-tongued abbess to take the veil, until rescued by devices even more improbable than the ones which put them there. Even as late as 1791, Mrs. Elizabeth Inchbald, a popular actress and accepted figure in London literary circles, was so cautious in her Catholicism that her best-known novel, *A Simple Story*, though it touches gingerly on religious materials, might as well have been written by a neutral Protestant.

Thus it is truly astonishing to find early in the century, in the thirty-year interim between the Jacobite risings of 1715 and 1745, when popular dread of Popery could at any moment be whipped to fever pitch, a woman who was not only a Catholic and a novelist but who dared to write as a Catholic novelist. Penelope Aubin, now so utterly forgotten that even the *Dictionary of National Biography*, the final source in most cases, does not list her, was in her own time well enough known so that her death occasioned an extended notice by the prominent Abbé Prevost in his French periodical, *Pour et Contre*, in 1734. Five years later her seven novels were collected in a three-volume edition, with an anonymous preface highly lauding her moral purpose; individual novels were reprinted as late as the 1770's.

TO THE modern reader, indeed, the novels of Penelope Aubin, with their long interpolated narratives in which new characters relate the histories of their lives, their shipwrecks on distant shores and captures by infidels, would seem very far from any contemporary ideal of a good novel, but they must be judged in the light of the period that produced them. Certainly they compare more than favorably with the works of many of her contemporaries such as Eliza Haywood, and Mary Manley de la Rivièrē, who are usually given detailed analysis in standard histories of the novel.

Described by one recent critic, B. G. MacCarthy, as a staunch Catholic whose object was to win her readers to the same faith, Penelope nevertheless was discreet enough never to let this design become too palpable. To judge by the dedicatory prefaces of her novels (now available only in the Singer-Mendenhall collection at the University of Pennsylvania), she and her husband enjoyed the patronage, if not the friendship, of several highly placed aristocrats. Perhaps, however, the real secret of her success in the apparently impossible task of pleasing an anti-Catholic public with pro-Catholic novels was that she steered clear of any vexed contemporary religious issues. Using Turks or other "infidels" for her villains, she embodied all the most attractive Christian virtues in her Continental Catholics, usually Italian or French, who, unlike Defoe's, are simply presented as good people without any apology or defense.

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*The Life of Madame de Beaumont, A French Lady* (1721), to be sure, seems to be the earliest piece of eighteenth-century English fiction to use what came to be the stock situation of the heroine detained behind convent walls, but this was apparently no more than a device to win the confidence of Protestant readers. Mrs. Aubin makes it quite clear that her Belinda's stay in a "Monastery of the Poor Clares" was the work of wicked guardians, of whose real designs the nuns were quite innocent. Her later imprisonment by her French father-in-law, supposedly as punishment for her refusal to turn Catholic, is discovered and strongly deplored by a wise and humble friar. "God forbid, said he, our Faith should be propagated by such detestable means as these." With the aid of a heroic colleague, he not only frees Belinda but arranges for her reunion with her long-missing husband—surely a surprising end for a story that ostensibly started out to tell of a Protestant lady persecuted by Catholics.

In her second novel, *The Strange Adventures of the Count de Vinevil and His Family* (1721), Mrs. Aubin makes no such compromise. Father Francis, a French missionary to Japan, though similar to Defoe's Benedictine in *Robinson Crusoe*, is given a much wider scope in which to display his admirable character. He hears the confession of a dying stranger, he eases the conscience of a lady troubled by her enforced stay in a harem, and when his party is shipwrecked on the isle of Delos he rises to new heights of cheerful selflessness, unobtrusively going without food that others may eat and offering wise counsel (never expressed pompously) on every occasion.

*The Noble Slaves, or the Lives and Adventures of Two Lords and Two Ladies* (1722) contains an almost identical priest, Father Augustine, but in one of the inset narratives Mrs. Aubin attempts a somewhat more complex religious character, M. de Chateau-Roial, a priest who has violated his vows by eloping with Clorinda, a girl destined by her family for the convent. The author is careful to detail the peculiar social factor which might tend to explain, if it cannot condone, such a lapse: the French custom of maintaining great estates intact by placing younger sons and daughters in the religious life without any regard to their inclinations.

Of all fictional uses of this situation, this novel seems the only one in which the lovers are neither sentimentally glorified nor smirkingly exposed as examples of Popish hypocrisy. They are, in fact, punished soon enough for their transgression when capture by Algerian pirates subjects them to a whole train of humiliating experiences terminated only by the influence of still another benevolent priest, a hermit named Clementine, who secretly ministers to Christian captives. By this time both Chateau-Roial and Clorinda are so deeply penitent that, though married, they agree to part if a proper religious dispensation cannot be obtained. Returned at last to Venice, he dies, but not

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before receiving the last sacraments and offering much belated advice to Clorinda, who now voluntarily retires to a convent. However melodramatized, this unhappy affair ends on a note of almost tragic dignity that must have come as a distinct novelty to English readers nurtured on nunnery tales of a far more lurid sort.

UNDOUBTEDLY the best-constructed of Penelope Aubin's novels, if only because it contains the fewest inset narratives, is *The Life and Adventures of the Lady Lucy* (1726), in which the Ulster estate of the heroine's family (apparently the first Jacobites to appear in English fiction) is seized by victorious British troops after the Battle of the Boyne. Fortunately, Lucy soon wins the heart of Count Albertus, a German captain who serves William III but is nonetheless "a very fine Gentleman, a Man nobly born, and a Roman Catholick, as the Lady Lucy and her Mother also were." After several years of happy married life at Heidelberg, Albertus, by villainous contrivances too complicated to summarize, is led to believe Lucy unfaithful. Though she is expecting her third child, the outraged husband takes her to a distant wood, stabs her and leaves her for dead. She is saved by a miracle (surely the only seriously presented miracle in any eighteenth-century novel); a mysterious voice announces her plight to a saintly Franciscan in a nearby monastery.

This excellent friar, Father Joseph, has Lucy carefully conveyed to the monastery for first aid, but at once arranges for her permanent care by a neighboring abbess, "it being altogether improper, and against the Rules of that Order, for her to remain in the other Convent, because of her Sex and Condition." No doubt Mrs. Aubin was only too well aware of what use had been made of similar situations in the more scandalous nunnery tales then current. Aided by kindly religious of both sexes, Lucy remains here to bear and rear her son, while Albertus goes off for an eventful career as a mercenary soldier in Flanders.

Years later, when he has learned the truth and repented his rashness, he retires from the world to live as a hermit, not far from the Franciscan monastery, and thus Father Joseph, aided by the long arm of coincidence, is able to reunite the parted pair. Lucy, thinking Albertus dead, had long since forgiven him and even has Masses said for his soul. Besides all these religious motifs, Albertus meanwhile has placed some illegitimate offspring in a "Convent of the Jesuits," and Lucy's cousin, widower of the wicked woman who caused all the trouble, has joined the Benedictines. Needless to say, the reunited couple give "large gifts to the Convent and Monastery where Lady Lucy and her Son had been so generously preserved and entertained."

Lady Lucy's adventures were so well received that, according to Mrs. Aubin's preface to her next novel, she was urged by a noble patroness, a duchess too exalted even to be named, to write a sequel. In *The Life and Adventures of*

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*the Young Count Albertus* (1728), the hero's religious bent begins to manifest itself early in the story. Not until near the end of the book, however, after a variety of experiences has disillusioned him with worldly satisfactions, does young Albertus become not only a priest but a missionary to China: "Four Jesuits being ordered on the Mission . . . Lord Albertus obtained Leave to accompany them, being very desirous to share their Labours, and bear a Part in their Sufferings, to propagate the Christian Faith. Thus the divine Wisdom does often direct us by secret Inspiration to the glorious Ends designed for those who follow its Dictates, and obey the divine Call: and he who loves his Saviour's Honor, and Mankind's Good before his own, shall not fail of a happy End."

It should be pointed out that the young man's motives are soundly religious, and though he lost his beloved wife some time before he does not, like more sentimental heroes, turn to the cloister as balm for a broken heart. As if to answer directly a charge made by Defoe in *Robinson Crusoe* that most Catholic missionaries were interested in visiting only the wealthiest heathen countries, Mrs. Aubin makes clear that Albertus and his companion, as soon as they have mastered the Chinese language, set out from Pekin for a remote frontier "on the confines of China next Tartary." Here, in a town called Cumchem, "he preached, exhorted, confessed, and baptized all who were willing, or could be drawn to embrace the Christian Faith, and performed all the Duties of an Apostle and Christian Pastor." Captured by Tartars, he secretly converts the son and two daughters of a general and, when this becomes known, is stoned to death, suffering martyrdom "with such Faith and constancy, that even his Murderers were filled with Admiration." Thus Mrs. Aubin created the only character in all eighteenth-century fiction who took religion seriously enough to die for it—a denouement more "enlightened" novelists would have shunned as the last extreme of that "enthusiasm" they abhorred.

Equally significant are the many Catholic elements in *The Life of Charlotte Dupont, an English Lady*, which may have been meant as a companion piece to *Madam de Beaumont* but which survives only in the posthumous collection of 1739. In an immensely complicated network of loosely connected narratives, one story is told by a man who confesses the murder of his wife to a Franciscan, described as "a Man of great Wisdom and Piety." As in *Lady Lucy*, however, Shakespeare's device of *A Winter's Tale* is borrowed, and the wife has secretly been rescued by another good priest, who keeps her safe in a convent until the husband has suffered sufficient remorse.

Still another plot line finds the hero, Beranger, marooned among South American Indians, among whom he finds an exceptionally good Spanish Benedictine missionary, who has built a chapel (where he keeps his vestments in a vault under the altar), administers Baptism and "blessed Eucharist" to the

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savages whom he has converted, and generally lives up to the frequently applied phrases "good monk" and "humble priest." The most singular circumstance in this novel, however, is the unique religious history of Charlotta herself. At one point in her eventful career, thinking Beranger lost to her forever, she marries the son of the Spanish governor of San Domingo and out of sheer necessity becomes a Catholic. Yet long after her husband's death, when she meets the Benedictine, we find that "Charlotta, who was now a sincere Roman Catholick, prevailed with the Monk to be her Chaplain, and to promise to continue with her the Rest of his days." He marries Charlotta to Beranger, who is presently "persuaded by his wife and the Monk to be a Roman Catholick, which he had been bred at first." This is certainly the only English novel of the entire eighteenth century in which either hero or heroine is converted, or won back, to Catholicism; in all other cases the process is reversed.

IN VIEW of the status of English Catholics in the 1720's, when vicious attacks like Conyers Middleton's *Letter from Rome*, which professed to show "an exact conformity between Popery and Paganism," went into several editions and were applauded from every fashionable pulpit, it surely took more than ordinary independence of mind for this forgotten writer to present Catholic themes with honesty and understanding. Not only do her works contain the only favorably depicted conversions, the only miracle, and the only martyr, but all her heroes and heroines, except Mme. de Beaumont and one other, are active Catholics whose lives are at some point influenced by their faith. Most notable are her many good religious. Whether Franciscans, Benedictines, or Jesuits, they are good, not merely on the humanitarian level of Defoe but specifically as Catholic priests. The only one to violate his vows, Chateau-Roial, is seen as a tragic figure who bitterly repents his transgression. The others baptize, preach, celebrate Mass, convert heathens, hear confessions, give Extreme Unction to the dying, all as if this were no more than was to be expected of them, unqualified by patronizing, grudging editorial comments of the sort that almost negate the few other attempts during the century at sympathetic depiction of priests. Except for Richardson's two in *Grandison*, Penelope Aubin's were the last admirable priests to appear in the English novel for more than fifty years. If her literary skill as a novelist was no more than average for her day, her moral courage as a Catholic was to remain unmatched among English writers for the remainder of the eighteenth century.

# "Pied Beauty" and the Glory of God

By John Britton, S.J.

Glory be to God for dappled things—  
For skies of couple-colour as a brindled cow;  
For rose-moles all in stipple upon trout that swim;  
Fresh-firecoal chestnut-falls; finches' wings;  
Landscape plotted and pieced—fold, fallow, and plough;  
And all trades, their gear and tackle and trim.

All things counter, original, spare, strange;  
Whatever is fickle, freckled (who knows how?)  
With swift, slow; sweet, sour; adazzle, dim;  
He fathers-forth whose beauty is past change:  
Praise him.

"PIED BEAUTY" is one of the most frequently anthologized of Gerald Manley Hopkins' poems, and it is not difficult to understand why. While it contains enough alliteration, assonance, unusual words, and novel word-links to present a fair picture of the poet's ordinary usages and singularities, it is at the same time readily intelligible. Even on first reading, the straightforward statement is clear enough, and it is probable that the average reader would sum it up thus: "The poet gives praise to God for the very diversity of beauty in this world; in the next-to-last line he calls attention to the wonderful fact that it is an unchanging God who creates this diversity, and the last two words invite the reader to join the poet in his hymn of praise." This is certainly correct, and it is not the intention of this article to contradict such an understanding of the poem, but there is a deeper, a more exact meaning, and one probably intended by Hopkins, that emerges from a consideration of a few basic concepts of scholastic philosophy. It is not another meaning that we seek, but an added richness that very likely is meant to be there. Of particular importance will be a new comprehension of the poet's skill in constructing the poem and of the beautiful precision with which he uses words.

An examination of *The Note-books and Papers of Gerard Manley Hopkins* (ed. Humphry House, London, 1937, esp. pp. 301-302 and 416) will show how deeply Hopkins felt about God's glory and the praise due Him—after all, the Jesuit motto is "Ad majorem Dei gloriam"—but we can be more exact in our examination of the meaning of this particular poem, precisely because Hopkins put this fine degree of exactness into it. "Pied Beauty" is based ultimately on certain very definite ideas presented to the poet during the course

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of his training in the Society of Jesus. We know from the manuscript notation that the poem was written at St. Beuno's, Wales, in the summer of 1877, just a few months before his ordination to the priesthood. This means that Hopkins had behind him his years of philosophical and theological study when he put together this "curtal sonnet"; indeed, they were fresh in his mind, since he would have been required to review thoroughly the studies now drawing to a close. It is possible that the matter we are about to discuss was first presented to Hopkins earlier, during his studies in philosophy at Stonyhurst, but it is certain that it formed a part of the treatise in theology called *De Deo creante et elevante*, a treatise that he would necessarily have had presented to him—and recently—as a part of his course of studies at St. Beuno's.

In ethics, which looks primarily to the actions which a man must posit to attain his end in life, and in the theological treatise *De Deo creante*, which is more a consideration of God's actions and plan, the same question arises (though from two different points of view): What is the purpose of creation? If it is God's will to create the universe, including man, what is the end, or *finis*, for which He creates? And what is the *finis* of creation as a whole and of man in particular when once created? Contrary to popular opinion, scholasticism is by no means a system in which there can be only one answer to any given question, nor is it true to suppose that the Church has long ago settled all matters dealing with God to the extent that heresy is just around the corner for anyone who does not agree with a simple majority of her philosopher-theologians. Even on such a basic level as that of the intention of God in creating the universe, there is room for different opinions. The actual variations of response do not concern us, but in any discussion of this question one very important element is sure to be brought up—the notion of *glory*, the first word of Hopkins' poem.

GLORY, says St. Ambrose, is "clara cum laude notitia," a definition accepted by St. Thomas Aquinas and repeated by the other scholastics after him. St. Thomas occasionally treats of glory, but he nowhere has an extended discussion of it. The "types" of glory which are today such a commonplace in the scholastic textbooks—"fundamental" and "formal" glory, "intrinsic" and "extrinsic" glory—are not found in Thomas' writings, but they do go back at least as far as 1619, when the famous Jesuit theologian Leonard Lessius, in his book *De perfectionibus moribusque divinis*, applied these classifications in such a way that, even if he did not himself originate the terms, he made them standard because of the controversy that arose over his use of them. Today, and in Hopkins' day, even though an ethics or theology teacher may not accept Lessius' application of the terms, he will adopt his terminology in discussing glory.

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Lessius and most subsequent writers begin their consideration of glory (as connected with creation) with the definition of St. Ambrose. This is a good definition, they say, because it brings out properly the two constituent notes of glory, the first being a true excellence and the second, a knowledge of that excellence with a resulting praise of the person responsible for it. These notes are called, respectively, the fundamental (or objective) and the formal aspects of glory, and we might note here, in respect to the latter, that love is the greatest praise that anyone can give to another. One further distinction is made, that between intrinsic and extrinsic glory. God has always had intrinsic glory, both fundamental and formal, since He has had from eternity the complete excellence which is His divine Goodness along with absolute knowledge and love of Himself. The extrinsic glory of God, however, results from Creation, not that God created in order to acquire further glory, since He is all-perfect in and by Himself, but, having determined out of pure love to share His goodness, He must direct all of the participants of that goodness to Himself. He could not act in any other way, but it is worth noting also that, from the creature's point of view, it is in the very act of giving God glory that a creature attains its own most perfect good, for this brings it closest to God, in Whom is the creature's end and beatitude.

**T**HIS extrinsic glory of God, with its two notes—fundamental and formal—is what Hopkins is particularly concerned with in the poem. The *fundamental* aspect of the glory resulting from Creation consists in the excellence which is manifested in the universe: the marvelous variety and diversity of its billions of creatures, the wonderful order among and within them, the external beauty which is seen and the internal beauty which is discovered—all this is a mirror of God's own excellence, revealing Him. But man is at the peak of the visible creation, for his is a unique task and privilege. He it is who renders to God the *formal* glory of the world. Only man, in the visible creation, can know the excellence which is in creation for what it is and give rational praise to the Creator. Only man can give God love, the greatest praise.

There is one statement of St. Thomas' that is pertinent to "Pied Beauty." He says (*S.T.*, I,47,1) that, since God has brought creatures into being to be a communication and representation of His own divine Goodness, it is easily understandable why there exists such a great diversity of creatures; for only through a multiplicity and variety in visible beings can man begin to understand the goodness which is simple and uniform in God. We must approach the divine Goodness through the pieces of goodness we actually see, so that the more pieces there are, the more likely are we to come to know and love God.

The application of all this to the poem under discussion is clear. Hopkins is not merely singing a hymn of praise to God for the beauties of nature, nor

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is he simply concerned with the individuality of things; he goes deeper. He begins with the word "glory" and ends with the words "praise Him," and in between he celebrates specifically the diversity of Creation, calling our attention in the penultimate line to the fact that it is the unchanging Beauty of God that is responsible for the different-ness and distinctiveness that is so wonderful in our world. The "glory" that the poet gives to God is the extrinsic glory; "praise Him" is the perfectly chosen phrase to indicate that formal aspect of the extrinsic glory that man adds to his recognition of the fundamental excellence which is described through the body of the poem. And by putting "glory" first, the description of the varied beauty in Nature second, and "praise Him" last, Hopkins ties up exactly, neatly, and very deliberately the whole philosophical idea we have been discussing. It is a singular mark of the poet's genius that he is able to write a work that is straightforward and clear to the ordinary reader and at the same time presents to the philosophically trained student a precise statement of one of the great concepts of Thomism. Seldom will there be found a clearer example of what the modern critics have in mind when they talk about "levels of meaning."

# Paul-André Lesort, Prosateur

By Spire Pitou

PAUL-ANDRÉ LESORT may be said to be almost unknown to the English reading public, both in the United Kingdom and the United States, although his first novel inspired favorable comment immediately. Begun in captivity at Oflag II B in March 1944 and terminated in freedom at Le Chesnay twenty-eight months later, *Les reins et les coeurs* prompted Gabriel Marcel to proclaim in 1947 that he could see no one among the new novelists to whom "one can and must give greater credit." Marcel added, "I have said enough about this book to indicate its extreme importance; it marks one of the most remarkable beginnings that have been scored in the domain of the novel in the past ten years."

Nor were these sentiments the expression of an initial enthusiasm, which so often greets a writer newly appearing on the literary scene, merely because he affords a certain novelty. Ten years later (May 16, 1957), André Bourin wrote in *Les Nouvelles Littéraires* that he had made the effort to re-read this novel of five hundred very closely printed pages and had laid the book down with the conviction that he had wasted neither time nor energy. Curiously enough, Lesort himself has said of his first work, "I must admit that *Les reins et les coeurs* is a book that I do not like to re-read now. I have put into it, at the same time, too many things and not enough." One should begin an account, then, of Lesort's literary activity by saying a word about his initial work.

THE FIRST impression that this book creates is one of an imposing mass, nearly twenty different characters being important enough to hold the central position at one moment or another in the action which, presented in nearly fifty chapters, transpires between October 17, 1933 and January 26, 1935. But skill in managing the plot and a large number of characters and incidents are no longer enough, of course, now that the novel has become more than a fireside pastime reserved for empty evenings: having gained literary maturity by assuming the responsibility of indicating their absence, a work in this genre has to do more than repeat previous or contemporary performances, if it is to be read more than once. As Pierre-Henri Simon observed in the preface to his *Témoins de l'homme* (1951), writing, to be taken seriously today, must offer a singularly thoughtful expression of the directions taken by the human conscience.

AWARE of this new function of the novel, Lesort employs as a starting point for *Les reins et les coeurs* the funeral announcement of a family patriarch, Adrien Drouet. The latter, a noted sociologist and the recipient of

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international honors, is also legator of an estate known as Haute-Pierre. At his death the survivors swarm like "beetles around a dead fieldmouse" in their frenzied desire to endow death with a moral purpose. The novelist proceeds to depict the family and its traditions as a dominating presence while the pageant of life unfolds in darkness or in light. But he avoids depicting the family again as a collection of poised harpies or dry-eyed neurotics. He shows it rather as an ominous entity, a hovering creature dragging its members into a murky and anonymous bosom.

Lest it be concluded in haste that Lesort is a misogynist or misanthrope, let it be noted that, married since 1938, he is the father of an eighteen year old daughter and three other children who grace his household in Versailles. In the aforementioned article by Bourin, he is reported to have said, "I have the luck to live in a world of children. The way they look at life takes my breath away. And what a prodigious way they have of seeing right through you, of knowing just what you are thinking!" Life in a concentration camp has led him to love rather than to hate life. "Just the opposite of Sartre, my salvation is other people," Lesort has remarked.

There is nothing paradoxical about these two apparently contradictory attitudes, between Lesort's distrust of the family and his love of his own family and people. The family which he views with dismay in his first novel is *the family* or, more specifically, the tradition that persists and pursues a cancerous growth from generation to generation, choking the individuals who constitute whatever presence it may enjoy. For example, Eugène Lavallée is married, but the identity of his newly founded family is endangered nearly as soon as it is established. Aware of the situation, he tells himself, "Here is the circle closing again"; the grandfather clock is beginning to toll for him too. Here is the same circle that enclosed his father, his grandfather, and even his great-grandfather "on the day when they refused to possess" their own land. For, especially in France, the opportunity for growth and independence begins only with the holding of the land whereon one lives. So, lacking this ownership, Eugène can do no more than ask himself how to break through the familial perimeter. His answer is to refuse, right from the start, "to get into the game" of dowries, wills, deeds, and all the other documents that come into being only because the family, through the instrumentality of a defunct forbear, has become a mythic monster that transmits its wealth in such a way that nobody receives or enjoys it fully.

Most graphic is the case of Geneviève Lavallée: in love with Emmanuel Valmont, she sees their engagement broken when he concludes that she will belong always to the family of her own birth. Emmanuel visits Haute-Pierre and comes to see that Geneviève will never sever the golden cord, joined as she is to the shadows, blossoms, and corners of her childhood. Her sentimental

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journey to and around Haute-Pierre is not enough by itself to induce Emmanuel to withdraw his suit: it is the family, her family, again. Forced to endure a session in the living room, Emmanuel views "between the tall windows of the vast room, this whole family swarming like a colony of microorganisms in a yeasty broth. Like these microorganisms which scurry to meet every foreign cell brought into their midst, which surround it, lock it up, absorb it, then finally reject it as a protoplasmic remnant. Why get mixed up in all this?"

Such preoccupation with the family as a corporate entity may seem excessive to readers attuned to the Anglo-Saxon tradition, but it is to be remembered that the French are conscious to a fault perhaps of the rights and responsibility of primogeniture and inheritance in general, more subject to the influence that heirship exerts for better or for worse. Forms of government and their concomitant societies may pass away, but the family remains with all the complications that blood-bonds entail whether the outcome be comic, tragic, or neither. It is the constant intrusion of the family upon its members that makes it possible for the French novel to have as one of its recognized categories "*le roman du couple*," a category which Lesort recognizes as his own in *Les reins et les coeurs*. He has said, "The couple interests me, involving as it does a special situation in which two individuals find themselves." As a matter of fact, his first novel might be viewed as an exhaustive treatment of the theme of the couple: the reader encounters couples who are young and old, single and married, licit and illicit, barren and fertile, rural and urban, Catholic and Protestant, rich and poor, hopeful and despairing. The couples seem to have but two things in common, their nationality and their humanity.

A THIRD striking feature of this first novel is the technique which Lesort develops for the presentation of the characters and action. He begins with his chapter heading, which is composed simply and unfailingly of two elements: the name of a character and a date. The former serves notice that the action of the chapter, taking place on the date indicated, will be seen through the eyes of this character and that, whenever an observation is made, it is the character and not the author who is reacting. The characters of the novel may be said literally to take over the march of events. The public has been quick to accept this procedure, remarking that the novelist has the gift of "getting inside his characters." Gabriel Marcel goes so far as to see an act of charity in each of Lesort's efforts to understand and to depict a situation other than his own. While sometimes there does not have to be much of an effort to adopt and then adapt a character's point of view, there are instances when the greatest skill is demanded, as in the case of a pregnant woman or a frightened child. A few statistics may give some idea of the range of the novelist's perspectives: the characters about whom the chapters revolve are nineteen in number; while

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only three are allotted five or more chapters, fourteen of the personages provide the perspective for no more than one or two of the entire forty-six divisions in the book. This moving forward of the core of interest during sixteen months, now through the eyes of one character and then through the eyes of another, creates a superrealistic effect. It is as if the reader were being introduced, through different doors at different moments, to a single drama being acted out by a cast all moving to individual and yet common destinies.

A simple example of the way Lesort's fictional technique operates is afforded when M. Drouet dies and it becomes evident on November 14, 1933 that young Fernand Drouet has decided to leave North Africa for home. His decision is presented not by means of direct narrative or by allowing him to present his reasons and reactions himself. It is Luce Manuel, a minor figure appearing only once, who furnishes the means whereby the reader is informed of this turn in the many events set in motion by the death of the head of the family. Also, variations in the pattern are obtained when a single scene is presented two or three times from the vantage point of two or three different characters. It is amazing how varied the same action becomes when faced from various angles, with or without smiles.

LIKE François Mauriac, Lesort insists he is a novelist who is a Catholic rather than a Catholic novelist. So the impression that the composition was written by a Catholic is not created by any plea. It is rather that certain incidents, sentiments, and themes would seldom occur to a non-Catholic. The sacraments of the Church are thoroughly understood by the Catholic characters, just as they are sometimes misunderstood by the non-Catholic characters. Only a Catholic author can portray convincingly a Protestant misunderstanding a Catholic doctrine? Only a Protestant writer can knowingly portray a Catholic misunderstanding a Protestant belief? Lesort's treatment of the sacraments of penance and matrimony make it especially clear that he knows about Catholic dogma. Also, the three theological virtues are introduced and become operative in a way that makes it apparent that he understands them to be theological virtues. But there is no straining to enter catechetical pleas or show that this group is "right" and that everybody else is "wrong." Each individual is what he is without any judgment or implication of judgment on the part of the author; each character bears his burdens with whatever strength is in his back and heart. Some may fall, for as Gabriel Marcel points out, Lesort, like Bernanos and Graham Greene, writes novels more Catholic than the traditional Catholic novel inasmuch as he avoids "the sin of angelism so often denounced by Jacques Maritain." Nor does he introduce noisy miracles or other sensational indications of God's presence. He goes about his task as a writer quietly and, one

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must say in the case of this first work, superbly well in detail, general concept, and execution.

LESORT'S second title is *Les portes de la mort* (1948), a collection of seven short stories all dealing with some aspect of the war he knew. The tone of the compositions is often openly savage; at other times the manner is quietly ironic. The title-piece, which introduces the volume, depicts the anxiety of the soldiers and the apparent lethargy of the government in the Chamberlain-Daladier-Hitler period. "Un Coup de main" is the story of a night raid by the French underground; "Les dernières volontés" recounts the horrors befalling private citizens during the early days of the German invasion. Except for this latter tale, perhaps, "La cigarette" is the most chilling realistic story in the collection, recounting as it does the adventures and psychology of three Frenchmen attempting in the midst of winter to spring to liberty. The remaining three stories deal with the adulterous wife of a prisoner of war, with a frightened girl running a message from Brittany to Paris for the F.F.I., with a soldier back from the war to die in a senseless accident. There is nothing extraordinary to report about this collection of war stories except to say that they are well done and tend towards simplicity of action and psychology. There is also a skillful concentration of interest on a single homely object such as a piece of cake, a cigarette, a motorcycle, a Sèvres clock.

HAVING delivered himself of an initial effort and having refined his feel for style and eye for detail in his short stories, Lesort was ready for his principal work, the trilogy which he has designed as *Le fil de la vie*. For just as he had tried to show how people wove their own beings and destiny into the lives and fate of other people in *Les reins et les coeurs*, he would now try to show the thread of life running through the lives of his characters, instead of weaving an entire fabric.

The first of the three volumes, entitled *Né de la chair* (1951) and already reviewed in *Renascence* (V,1), departs from the technique employed in *Les reins et les coeurs* by being divided into two parts although the practice of using the chapter heading as a means of designating the date of the action is continued. The first part of the novel is entitled *Charles Neuville* and extends from July 13, 1906 to September 16, 1929; the second part, *Yves Neuville*, starts on October 1, 1912 and ends on February 5, 1930. Thus, the years 1912-29 are covered in each section. The initial incident is the birth of Yves Neuville, an event witnessed by his father, Charles, and explaining the title of the novel. The first section of the book may be divided into three sections: Charles' founding of his family, his experiences in the army, his post-war disappointments and defeat—this last event recalling the *Death of a Salesman* theme. The

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second portion of the volume may be divided into Yves' babyhood, his studies at the Lycée, his first job, his love affair with Françoise. The last stages in the fiction are Charles's death and Françoise's pregnancy. In place of tracing the interplay of a dozen or more families or couples and the impact they have upon each other, M. Lesort now portrays one family from the time of the birth of the first child until the moment when this child in turn begets a child of his own to spin out "the thread of life."

As René Lalou has pointed out, the method of retracing the same duration of time as lived by two closely related characters is not new. Arnold Bennett did the same thing to a degree in *Clayhanger* and *Hilda Lessways*. But here it was a question of a man and his wife, a situation quite different from that involving a man and his son. And, in the latter instance developed by Lesort, we see the differences between two generations, one generation being obliged to find its way in war and the other faced with the problems that come with an uneasy peace. One finds the same care in allowing the characters to move and develop without interference on the part of the novelist. It is clear again that the creator of the characters and situations is a Catholic, especially when the reader encounters protests against angelism and lack of respect for the Real Presence in the cathedral of Notre-Dame de Paris.

THE second novel of the trilogy, *Le vent souffle où il vent* (1954), is divided into forty-five chapters but, unlike *Né de la chair*, it contains no formal divisions. The chapter headings retain both the dates for the action of the chapter and the name of the central character. But there are only two characters named, Yves and Françoise. This second novel, then, continues where the first concludes and extends over the period of March 3, 1930 to August 16, 1941. The last chapter is in the form of a letter.

The transition between these first two novels of the trilogy is accomplished without abruptness. It is taken for granted that readers of *Le vent Souffle où il vent* will remember that, although Françoise and Yves had decided in *Né de la chair* that their love was so pure and strong that it needed neither civil nor religious sanction, it became clear to them eventually that at least a city hall ceremony would be necessary. So the civil wedding takes place on Sept. 16, 1929; Charles Neuville dies the following winter on February 5, 1930, leaving his married son, unmarried daughter, and wife. Hence the second novel begins at the point where the first generation has passed away and the third generation is not yet born. And the first chapter, dated March 3, 1930, is given over to the birth of Jean-Louis Neuville just as the first chapter of *Né de la chair* is concerned with the birth of Yves Neuville, son of Charles Neuville and father of Jean-Louis Neuville.

The principal phases of the action, therefore, center about the marriage of Yves and Françoise, and the birth of their three children. As the children

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grow older, two episodes dominate the fiction: Charles's decisions about the spiritual direction of his life and his fate as a soldier. Twice he makes an effort to understand the doctrine of the Church; twice he abandons his decision to enter the fold. Françoise, fearing that she will lose part of her husband if he becomes a Roman Catholic, opposes his tendency towards an acceptance of the Credo although she herself was reared in the Church. It is not until Charles is captured by the Germans and sent to Stalag II M in Pomerania that he finally accepts baptism. The event takes place on Christmas eve, because "Christmas is the sap in the old tree. In the longest night of the year, it is the proclamation of the sun. But much more. Beyond the eternal return, which animates the flesh and the plants and the stars, it is the proclamation of history without return, of history animated by Him Who breathes where He will."

In *Le vent souffle où il vent*, Lesort has managed that most difficult of all performances: a literary demonstration of the workings of grace. It stirs first with the presence of the priest from Saint-Germain-des-Prés, then with Père Blanchet, who had his own fears to overcome before taking Holy Orders. But grace is not really operative within Charles until, opening his heart in acceptance, he discovers his own soul. Before this time, the human and essentially corporeal love of his family seemed enough; he, Françoise, and their three children were the instruments of their own love, being sufficient unto themselves as far as they could see. Only later does Charles come to understand that "God's grace transforms love into an image of the love of God" and that "the Church proclaims this by the sacrament of matrimony."

But the book is far from being a happy tale. It is rather the story of all hopes except one being peeled away layer by layer as one would tearfully peel an onion to its heart. Often surviving artillery and planes, and fifteen months of hell on earth besides, to be left with the knowledge that the English can get into their ships again, as at Dunkirk, that the Americans are quite happy to remain in America, is but one aspect of their plight. The watery soup, the cold barracks built of tarpaper, the mud inside as well as outside, the crowded quarters, these are but the physical features of their imprisonment. There are also the sense of severance, the inborn loneliness, the perpetual and fruitless impetus towards wherever home may be, the worry, and finally the temptation to despair.

Just before Charles Neuville dies of typhoid, he speaks with the priest who baptized him. He assures Charles that as long as he feels reached, he will survive in hope. The great danger is detachment, indifference walking the brim of despair. "Never separate yourself! To suffer through the Church is nothing; you must suffer in the Church. And our suffering, we owe it to each other, it must circulate in our blood, in the very blood of this body whose members Jesus

## PAUL-ANDRÉ LESORT, PROSATEUR

Christ has given us. Neuville, don't fail the Church. There are so many who do fail her!"

The second volume of the trilogy is not a jubilant one, then, in the ordinary sense of the word, especially since the protagonist, finally finding his salvation, is snuffed out by a typhous flea. He is buried in alien soil under the shadow of barbed wire and raised gunbutts, leaving a crushed widow with three children, a widowed mother, and a sister who is an unwed mother herself. But his last days were given to the sick and the dying. This was his testimony to charity, his evidence of faith in the persistence of the spirit even after evanescence in a frozen, lime-lined ditch in Pomerania.

And what meaning had it all? Lesort answers the query with an allusion to the collective title of his trilogy: "This thread, this thread of our life, this thread of the life of the world, who has the right to seize it, who has the right to hold both ends of it except Him?" He alone knows why the godless have been let loose.

LESORT's latest publication, *Le fer rouge* (1957) is not the termination of his trilogy. It is a *nouvelle*, being too long for a short story and too short to be a novel. The form is a notebook, written in the first person singular by a woman who feels that her life has been isolated through her husband's calculated generosity and innate selfishness. Faced with effacement, by means real or imagined, she entertains thoughts of suicide in order to bring a self-established meaning to a life that she believes to be without meaning. Left alone and deprived of her illegitimate son, she is consumed by a hatred so quiet and so pure that she plots the way for her memory to be left burned in the mind of her husband. The latter has attempted to abolish the memory of her child, so what greater justice might there be for her than to brand the red scar of memory upon her husband, who has been so careful to make her forget everybody and everything but him?

Lesort has attempted three prose forms, and he has done them well. His short stories, his three long novels, and his "nouvelle" comprise an authorship that invites more than one reading. His presence on the literary scene will be appraised more fully in the future. His knowledge of technique and his view of the contemporary scene would appear to merit this much at the least.

# Faith and Belief: A Footnote to Greene's "Visit to Morin"

By Thomas A. Wassmer, S.J.

PALATO has some interesting words to say about agnosticism concerning the gods. In *Timaeus* he tells Socrates: "Do not be surprised, Socrates, if over a wide range of topics connected with God and the creation of the universe we are not able to make statements that are entirely consistent with themselves or at all precise. But if we produce what is as probable as anything else, we must be content, remembering that I who speak and you who judge are only human beings and must accept the probable story about these things and not go in search of anything beyond." Graham Greene in *A Visit to Morin* (Harper's Bazaar, Jan. 1957) might have consoled the author of *Le Diable au Ciel* and *Le Bien Pensant* if he had placed these words of Timaeus on the lips of Dunlop, the visitor. They might not have satisfied the mind of Morin whom some had accused of Jansenism while others insisted upon calling him an Augustinian. Still, they might have made less difficult the speculation on faith and belief between Dunlop, the buyer and seller of wine, and this novelist who could tantalize his readers with such diverse characters, some of whom "accepted a dogma so whole-heartedly that they drew out its implications to the verge of absurdity, while others examined a dogma as though they were constitutional lawyers, determined on confining it to a legal minimum."

The encounter on Christmas Eve between these two men was bound to be stimulating. Dunlop, a non-Catholic, had been driven to ask a Catholic chaplain during the war to teach him just what Catholics *did* believe but the answer he received was a loan of two books—"one a penny catechism with its catalogue of preposterous questions and answers, smug and explanatory: mystery like a butterfly killed by cyanide, stiffened and laid out with pins and paper strips." The chaplain suggested that he read Chesterton rather than Morin's novels although Dunlop surprised the priest by telling him that his first interest in the faith was stirred by the books with which the chaplain would not waste his time. The wine merchant had found Morin's work fresh and exciting ever since he had been taught by a Roman Catholic master who had been close to Morin's generation. Perhaps the pleasure and offense that Morin had provoked in that generation were the real reasons why Dunlop discovered increasing fascination for this intense writer. Dunlop soon became one of those "enthusiastic readers among the non-Christians who, when once they had accepted imaginatively Morin's premises, perhaps detected in his work the freedom of specu-

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lation which put his fellow Catholics on their guard." Little wonder that he looked upon him as a revolutionary writer even though some of the excitement and fire had gone from those pages.

The first encounter with Morin was at the midnight Mass in a village outside Colmar while he was kneeling at the crib with several others—an old man with a round head "like a peasant's, the skin wrinkled like a stale apple, the hair gone from the crown." It was Morin's eyes that gave him away: "they seemed to know too much and to have seen further than the seasons and the fields: of a very clear, pale blue, they continually shifted focus looking close and looking away, observant, sad and curious like those of a man caught in some great catastrophe which it is his duty to record, but which he cannot bear to contemplate without a break for any length of time." At Communion time Dunlop found himself alone with Morin among the empty chairs and began to enumerate in his mind the possible reasons for his remaining away from the holy table: inadvertent breaking of his fast, some slight act of uncharity or greed, some scruple about his lack of preparation. Had not Morin been the very one to prove to him the existence of this malady in Religious and, after all, was it not likely that he had projected his own scrupulosity upon his literary character, Durobier? Dunlop was reluctant to approach Morin on this subject; in fact, he wondered whether he could ever explain the reasons for the "vulgarity" of his curiosity in approaching him at all. He was convinced that writing is the most private of all arts and yet there are few of us who hesitate one moment to invade the writer's privacy.

When Morin invited the wine merchant to his home on the grounds that he always found it difficult to sleep after midnight Mass and that he would like to offer his visitor some rare wine, the real encounter began. Morin expressed his satisfaction that Dunlop was not a Catholic because he could cast away any fears of offending him. What Morin did say in the course of this speculation on faith and belief might possibly offend some Catholics but it will undoubtedly arouse many more questions than the theologically naive Dunlop could raise. There were many books on the shelves of the novelist which "had the appearance of bankrupt stock: small tears and dust and the discoloration of sunlight." There were many volumes on theology but Morin would recommend none of them to Dunlop, because, "if a man wants to believe he must avoid theology." Is this another of Greene's paradoxes—that belief is undermined by theology and that there is an antimony between faith and belief? Surely Dunlop understood that Morin intended this paradox when he remarked: "A man can accept anything to do with God until scholars begin to go into details and the implications. A man can accept the Trinity, but the arguments that follow . . ." "Can you find anything more inadequate than the scholastic arguments for the existence of God. . . ." "I used to get

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letters saying how I had converted them by this book or that. Long after I had ceased to believe myself I was a carrier of belief, like a man can be a carrier of disease without being sick."

THE tension between faith and belief that Morin considered to be so sharp is not impossible to accept if Morin is understood to have meant by faith the theological virtue, supernatural and gratuitous, whereby, in the words of the Vatican Council, "inspired and assisted by the grace of God, we believe that the things which He had revealed are true; not because the intrinsic truth of the things is plainly perceived by the natural light of reason, but because of the authority of God Himself who reveals them, and who can neither be deceived nor deceive." In other words there is most certainly a tension between theological faith and rational belief, and, paradoxically, theological faith might be consummate in someone who has little sympathy with the scholastic arguments from natural theology. We might even accentuate the paradox for Morin and his visitor by illustrating the tension existing in the mind of a professional theologian who has at his finger tips all the rational arguments and theological loci for the propositions of the faith and yet has lost the theological virtue of faith by his public articulation of an heretical doctrine. In other words, there is a compatibility between exhaustive theological knowledge and the absence of theological faith. This tension *has* to exist if faith is entitatively supernatural and sheerly gratuitous. Conversely, the tension is manifest in the absence of all theological knowledge and the presence of transcendent faith. Who has not met the Catholic whose faith is accompanied by an extraordinary ignorance of philosophical and theological proofs and by an almost equal disinterest in their acquisition?

We are not surprised then by Morin's recognition of this patent truth even if he is made to say it in a very startling manner. The paradoxes Greene places on his lips can be made all the more striking by the professional theologian. Ignorance and some dissatisfaction with rational arguments are compatible with supernatural faith; and who is going to emphasize this truth more than the Church does in demanding infant baptism, which produces sanctifying grace and brings the theological virtue of faith in its train? How many infants have ever found satisfaction with the natural theology of St. Thomas? Is Morin equivalently telling us to remain infants in theology and philosophy:

"They tell you that in all change there are two elements, that which is changed and that which changes it. Each agent of change is itself determined by some higher agent. Can this go on ad infinitum? Oh no, they say, that would not give the finality that thought demands. But does thought demand it? Why shouldn't the chain go on forever? Man has invented the idea of infinity. In any case how trivial any argument based on what human thought demands must be. The thoughts of you and me

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and Monsieur Dupont. I would prefer the thought of an ape. Its instincts are less corrupted. Show me a gorilla praying and I might believe again."

"But surely there are other arguments?"

"Four. Each more inadequate than the other. *It only needs a child to say to these theologians, why?—why not?* Why not an infinite series of causes? Why should the existence of a good and a better imply the existence of a best? This is playing with words. We invent the words and make arguments from them. The better is not a fact: it is only a word and a human judgment."

THESE formulations of the cosmological and henological arguments will annoy the philosopher-theologian but they cannot annoy him as much as one single statement made by Morin which only compounds the problem. The speculation indulged in by Morin and Dunlop thus far has been intelligible and reasonable except for the following observation: "I used to believe in Revelation but *I never believed in the capacity of the human mind.*" Does it not seem that Morin has pushed his disbelief too far and that the acid of scepticism has been applied not only to rational arguments in philosophy and theology but even to the very aptitude of the mind to attain truth? Morin appears to have been influenced by the anti-intellectualism of fideism and the traditionalism of the nineteenth century. Instigated by the German agnostics who disparaged the rational powers in man, the Fideists denied that the foundations of religious belief and practice, such as the existence of God, the freedom of the will, and the immortality of the soul could any longer be legitimated by an appeal to reason.

The valid tension postulated by Morin between the theological faith and rational disbelief (in the sense of dissatisfaction with rational arguments) can be found in the precocious young lady in a short story by Mary McCarthy. She had caused a great deal of bewilderment and consternation in the convent school of the Religious of the Sacred Heart by her insistence that she was sure that she had lost her faith because she found none of the arguments from St. Thomas for the existence of God cogently and demonstrably valid. Reverend Mother should have made short shrift of her protests by a simple explanation of the compatibility between theological faith and a refusal to accept certain rational arguments as probative. This young lady (Miss McCarthy?) had not necessarily lost her faith simply because theodicy had lost its appeal.

Admittedly, the position is temerarious that questions the radical capacity of the human mind to know God. The teaching of the Catholic Church is stated clearly by the Vatican Council: "Holy Mother Church holds and teaches that God, the beginning and end of all things, may be certainly known by the natural light of human reason by means of created things" (*Constitutio de Fide Catholica*, Chapter 2). The Church's vindication of the capacity of

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human reason to know God is a reaffirmation of the Pauline text in the Epistle to the Romans: "The invisible things of Him, from the creation of the world, are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made." The Church has little sympathy, on the one hand, with those who disparage human reason (the fideists and traditionalists) nor, on the other, with the olympian pretensions of the rationalists that reason is "the sole judge of the true and the false . . . that it is a law to itself and sufficient by its natural powers to procure the good of men and peoples" (*Syllabus of Pius I*, n. 3).

Pierre Morin is indeed no exaggerated rationalist and if he had not made the bold statement that is suggestive of fideism he would have proposed the problem which torments the philosopher-theologian. Just how far can we conceive this tension to operate between faith and rational doubt, between the *fides anctoritatis* (the theological, supernatural, gratuitous virtue of faith) and the *fides scientifica* (the dialectical conclusions from a series of syllogisms)? Just how far *can* and *should* an intelligent man exercise his prudent scepticism and realize within himself the dual obligation to doubt and to believe? It would appear to me, as a moral philosopher, that the distance is wide between a healthy consistent scepticism with rational arguments and a categorical negation of the aptitude of the mind to know God.

We are always indebted to Greene for making us re-examine our philosophical and theological positions. We expect him to place both literary shoulders against these polarities of faith and reason and to separate them as far as reality will allow. There is no complaint in his doing this with Morin's speculation on faith and belief. In fact this is one of the most admitted artistic devices of Greene. We can only wish that he had not delivered Morin so soon into the hands of the fideists.

# Review-Article:

## Lights! Curtain!

*Louis Jouvet: Man of the Theatre.* By Bettina Liebowitz Knapp. Forward by Michael Redgrave. Columbia University Press. \$6.00.

HEINRICH SCHLEIMANN, in the archaeological world, cast aside scholarly arguments, armed himself with pick, shovel, and a blind acceptance of Homer, and discovered classical Troy for the modern world. In the realm of the theatre, Schliemann's implicit and perseverant belief in the veracity of an ancient poetry is matched by the faith of Louis Jouvet, who abandoned the sterile, intellectual approach to seventeenth century plays, and allowed his intuition, his sensations, and his trust in Molière to guide him to the discovery of the true spirit of the classical theatre.

The stifling layers of physical handicaps, mannerisms, artificiality and convention through which Jouvet had to dig in order to reach the treasure within him is a process described in absorbing detail by the author of this biography. Mrs. Knapp writes: "Once Jouvet had selected his play, he would think about it for months, even for years. . . .Consciously or unconsciously he hovered over it. It would come and go in his fancy, as if it had a life of its own. Gradually the play would reach deep into his very being and the living scenes would take shape."

The spiritual and intellectual beliefs, doubts, sufferings, and the emotional conflicts of Louis Jouvet are of interest in themselves. Add to them the physical preoccupations of an actor-director-producer-general stage manager, and the result is an overwhelming lesson to the complacent, sedentary reader of a Molière or a Giraudoux play.

Jouvet, man of the theatre *par excellence*, oddly enough marked his first achievement in 1913 by receiving a degree in pharmacy, after having failed three times the entrance requirements at the Paris Conservatory in 1908. But the same year, 1913, was to bring him to Jacques Copeau, who was seeking fresh new actors for the Vieux Colombier theatre.

Copeau and Jouvet, in their work together, stressed the concept of the actor possessed of a unity of body parts. Jouvet would concentrate his efforts on the manipulation of an arm, or the forearms, or a leg, in such a way as to render a complete expression of feeling. One imagines him as a life-size marionette whose various joints are put into motion with different plays, all parts becoming unified ultimately at the height of an acting career.

After assuming several roles of minor importance, Jouvet finally caught the public's attention in 1914 in two plays of quite different inspiration: Molière's *La Jalousie du Barbouillé*, and *The Brothers Karamazov*. But as Jouvet was coming to light, the war threatened to darken the French theatrical scene. So, Copeau and the members of the Vieux Colombier decided to add their names to the list of Frenchmen who chose to perform for the United States public: Yvette Guilbert, Pierre Monteux, Robert Casadesus, et al. In New York, the Vieux Colombier's presentation of Molière's *Les Fourberies de Scapin* proved to be a failure, but *Twelfth Night*, *The Brothers Karamazov*, *L'Avare*, and *Le Carrosse*

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*du Saint Sacrement* met with success. While in New York City, Jouvet observed keenly the architecture, the streets, and other salient characteristics of the metropolis with the same interest he observed color harmonies in the nature of southern France, all to the purpose of cataloguing his impressions for future use in designing stage sets.

Returning to Paris, Copeau and Jouvet worked fervidly on new plays such as Tolstoy's *L'Amour*, *Livre d'or*, and Gide's *Saul*. The years between 1919 and 1922, marked by Jouvet's untiring devotion to all aspects of the theatre—stage-setting, lighting, sound effects, costumes, directing, diction, and physical education—are vividly described by the author and analyzed in all their significance.

By 1922, however, jealousy had arisen among the members of the Vieux Colombier troupe, and Jouvet was obliged to leave Copeau. Jacques Hébertot's Théâtre des Champs-Elysées was now to claim Jouvet as its technical director. His brilliance as both actor and stage setter manifested itself in 1923 in Romain's *M. Le Trouhadec Saisi par la débauche*: in the leading part, Jouvet was "sly and cunning at times, at others honest and upright—a mixture of sometimes contradictory qualities, and yet in no sense disjointed." The décor, representing the gardens in front of the Casino de Monte Carlo, was the *pièce de résistance*, with its symbolic palm trees which leaned toward and away from each other according to Trouhadec's luck at the wheel and at love.

But an even more outstanding success was awaiting Jouvet in the same year: his memorable portrayal of Knock was to make this play his "magic" one, his "money-maker" for slump seasons. His biographer lets us sit beside Jouvet to see his method in producing the fabulous *Knock* for several pages of fascinating reading.

As director of the Comédie des Champs-Elysées, Louis Jouvet produced a wide variety of plays (Romain's *La Scintillante*, Mazaud's *La Folle Journée*, Renard's *Le Pain de ménage*, Martin du Gard's *Le Testament du père Leleu*, Crommelynck's *Tripes d'or*, Vildrac's *Madame Béliard*, Zimmer's *Bava, l'Africain*), some of which were successes, others failures. But the successes, which might have tempted Jouvet to fix a set philosophy and rules of comedy, never gave rise to a feeling of satisfaction. Instead, Jouvet saw "everything in the theatre in a constant state of flux. . . . He believed that the actor should be guided by his intuition and senses much more than by his intellect." To this end, Jouvet worked continuously to achieve the ideal of the *commedia dell'arte* characters: "an absolute splitting of the personality."

In 1926, the year the actor was named Chevalier de la Légion d'Honneur, Jouvet gave two noteworthy examples of altruism: in an effort to bring contemporary artists to the eyes of a constantly changing public, Jouvet conceived the idea of hanging their paintings along the corridors and staircases of his theatre, to the delight both of artists and audiences. A second incident reveals that, the Comédie Française having refused Romans' *Le Dictateur*, and Jouvet having decided to stage it, the latter twice generously relinquished his option when the Comédie Française twice changed its stand on producing *Le Dictateur*.

The year 1926 was also marked by three outstanding theatrical successes: Sutton Vane's *Outward Bound*, produced in the Casino de Monte Carlo, where startling stage and lighting effects were achieved by Jouvet who, in addition, played the role of the alcoholic Tom Prior; Gogol's *Inspector General*, in which

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Jouvet skilfully and subtly played the leading character "with frenzied fantasy and almost constant agitation"; and finally, Jean Sarment's *Léopold, le bien-aimé*, a play which had been refused by the Comédie Française, but of which Jouvet wrote to the author: "I have just been crying while reading *Léopold*, and I must tell you how attracted I am to him."

Jouvet, Dullin, Baty, and Pitoëff—the "cartel" formed in 1927—found themselves involved on January 25, 1928, in a battle of *The Birds*, a fantasy by Bernard Zimmer, adapted from Aristophanes. Not that the play was controversial. Simply that after the first act of a play has begun, it is one thing to be annoyed by noisy latecomers, and another thing to be left standing in the cold outside the locked front doors of the theatre. The decision of the cartel to keep out interrupting factors once the curtain had risen gave rise to a veritable polemic, described with feeling by the author.

The writer Bernard Zimmer, a loyal friend of Jouvet, is connected with an unsuccessful play produced by the latter (*Le Coup du 2 Décembre*) in 1928, and a happier occasion: it was Zimmer who introduced Giraudoux and Jouvet—a presentation without which, according to Mrs. Knapp, "the French theatre might have had a less brilliant future." Jouvet and Giraudoux were to become closely united, Jouvet showing Giraudoux how to point up dialogue, plot, and character development by omitting superfluous material, and Giraudoux, in his turn, leading the actor by way of *Siegfried*, *Amphitryon 38*, *La Guerre de Troie n'aura pas lieu*, *Electre*, *Ondine*, and *Intermezzo* to the true classical expression of his talents. *Siegfried*, one of Giraudoux's plays which had been rewritten several times under Jouvet's guidance, and which starred Pierre Renoir, son of the painter, was a tremendous success, and marked a rebirth of the theatre according to some critics.

Following *Siegfried*, the list of Jouvet's successful productions is dazzling: Steve Passeur's *Suzanne*, Achard's *Jean de la lune* (in which Jouvet played the role of Jef, the puzzling idealist), Gignoux's *Le Prof d'anglais* (for which Jouvet's interpretation of the English professor obsessed with Shakespeare received high acclaim), Romains' *Donogoo-Tonka* (an ambitious, complex enterprise in the form of a satire of modern business practices, for which Jouvet sketched the sets that were to take the audience all over the world), Martin du Gard's *Un Taciturne*, and a crowning brilliant tour of Europe. That this period should have coincided with the beginning of Jouvet's spells of melancholy, futility, and fear (he was now about forty-one years of age) is only more indicative of the fact that Jouvet was still searching for a treasure deep within himself.

As his grand finale at the Comédie des Champs-Elysées, Jouvet produced Cocteau's *La Machine infernale*, and then, in October 1934, assumed the direction of the Athénée Theatre, opening his season with two successful plays of Giraudoux: *Amphitryon 38* and *Tessa* (an adaptation of *The Constant Nymph*). That year was also to see Jouvet elected to a professorship at the same Conservatory which had refused him admission as a student. Jouvet's pedagogical concepts and methods are fully explained by his biographer, who reveals that Jouvet pushed to the point of superstition his concept of the theatre as a living thing with a soul, a "dramatic sonority," and a capacity to enjoy good or bad health. Mrs. Knapp also analyzes one of the articles Jouvet wrote for the Encyclopedia, entitled "L'Interprétation dramatique," in which Jouvet discusses the

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difference between an "acteur" and a "comédian," and outlines the various steps required of a student who plans to adopt the acting profession.

In 1939 Jouvet, deprived of most of his cast and crew who had been mobilized for the Second World War, unenthusiastically accepted a film offer. (After the war, Jouvet again turned to the films and made a very popular movie, *Le Quai des Orfèvres*, but never did he feel comfortable in the film world). The following year he eagerly returned to the stage, only to encounter innumerable difficulties at the hands of the occupiers, who forbade works by Romans and Giraudoux, and offered Jouvet Schiller's and Goethe's plays. The actor chose to tour Switzerland and South and Central America, producing an astonishing repertory of new and old plays. His visit to São Paulo in 1942 could not have been more discouraging: the city was in the throes of a transportation strike combined with a flu epidemic, and fire broke out in the theatre the night of Jouvet's presentation of *L'Ecole des Femmes*. However, the generosity and encouragement of the South Americans helped Jouvet solve his many problems until 1945, when he returned to France anticipating neither generosity nor encouragement from the Parisian public he had left behind, and who, he thought, considered him a "has-been." But the fears of Jouvet and his troupe were allayed when the Athénée audiences applauded warmly his revival of *L'Ecole des Femmes* and his new productions: *La Folle de Chaillot*, *L'Annonce faite à Marie*, and *Apollon de Marsac*. This period witnessed a very nervous and disturbed Jouvet, who keenly felt the void created by Giraudoux's death. His nervousness was channeled into an intense effort to work on the musical rhythm and poetic language of the plays he was producing (especially *La Folle de Chaillot*, *L'Annonce faite à Marie*, and Genêt's *Les Bonnes*) in an effort to restore the spoken word's incantatory power.

The spiritual communication between the Athénée troupe and the Parisian public having been re-established, Jouvet felt secure in accepting the invitation to represent France at the Edinburgh International Festival of Music and Drama where *L'Ecole des Femmes* and *Ondine* were applauded, and in playing in Egypt, North Africa, and much of Europe during the following years on highly successful tours.

Up to this time, *La Folle de Chaillot* is, perhaps, the play which revealed most fully Jouvet the classicist, whose "work bore the stamp of clarity, order and simplicity." Upon returning to Paris after the Edinburgh Festival, however, Jouvet finally decided to bring forth what had lain deeply within him for so long: he would produce the two most controversial plays of Molière—*Tartuffe* and *Don Juan*. In *Louis Jouvet: Man of the Theatre*, one may find a penetrating discussion of Jouvet's approach to Molière "through the gateway of love." Having passed through the phases of setting the conception of the character both in heart and mind, and of developing an intimacy between the actor and the character and the play as a whole, Jouvet came forth with a psychoanalytical approach which breathed new life into the character of *Don Juan*. As *Tartuffe*, Jouvet, losing himself completely in the role, departed drastically from the usual presentation of the character, and shocked the critics.

Christian Bérard, who had been closely associated with Jouvet as the creator of stage sets and costumes of exceptional originality (for *La Machine infernale*, *La Folle de Chaillot*, *Les Bonnes*, *La Guerre de Troie n'aura pas lieu*, *L'Ecole des Femmes*, and, finally, for Molière's *Don Juan* and *Les Fourberies de Scapin*).

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died in Jouvet's arms just six days before the opening of *Les Fourberies de Scapin* in 1950. The sorrowful incident plunged the actor into deep religious meditation comparable to his period of absorption in Saint Francis de Sales' *Introduction à la vie dévote* and in the works of Saint Augustine and Saint Theresa during the Second World War.

Concealing his personal feelings and his weak physical condition to the point of stoicism, Jouvet determined to produce Molière's *Le Misanthrope* and *L'Avare* and Giraudoux's *Pour Lucrèce* during the 1950-51 season. His plans were changed by half-hearted consent to produce Sartre's *Le Liable et le Bon Dieu*, and further interrupted by a North-American tour. After attending, on Ash Wednesday of 1951, a Mass for artists who might die within the year (and indeed, August 16, 1951 is the date of the actor's death), Jouvet left with his troupe for Montreal, Quebec, Boston, and New York—a tour which was to prove a severe drain on his health. Jouvet continued to act in spite of having suffered a heart attack.

Returning to Paris, Jouvet's work with the author of *Le Diable le Bon Dieu* gave rise to inevitable conflicts between Sartre, the speaker for atheism, and Jouvet, the deeply religious man. But the play, in spite of all, was a success.

In order to "cleanse himself of any sinful connection with *Le Diable et le Bon Dieu*," Jouvet next turned to the production of Graham Greene's *The Power and The Glory*, adapted for the stage by Pierre Bost. The rehearsals for this play taxed Jouvet to the utmost; his health was failing him and he had difficulties understanding the character he was to portray. Yet his tenacity in striving to fulfill his part was marvelous. He confided to his friend and adviser, Father Laval, that with the production of Greene's play, "I shall tell a little of what I feel, of what I believe."

But Jouvet was not to tell it to mortals.

It was to be told in the story of the integrity, the devotion, the sufferings and the humility of *Louis Jouvet, Man of the Theatre*.

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ALBA-MARIE FAZIA

## Book Reviews:

### Virgil, Yeats, and 13,000 Friends

*On Poetry and Poets.* By T. S. Eliot. Farrar, Straus and Cudahy. \$4.50

*Selected Writings of Jules Laforgue.* Edited and translated by William Jay Smith. Grove. \$4.00.

ELIOT'S *On Poetry and Poets* is a very important book for the student of twentieth century letters. Page by page it contains a range of implication and perception that only an oral exegesis can cope with.

The section on poetry opens with "The Social Function of Poetry" (1945) and concludes with "The Frontiers of Criticism" (1956). This last essay was delivered in Minneapolis to an audience of more than 13,000 people which suggests that Eliot had passed some frontiers he had not forethought of. The section on poets opens with "Virgil and the Christian World" (1951) and concludes with "Yeats" (1940).

Taken together these essays have a scope and meaning as striking as the *Selected Essays* of 1932. But they do not have the same degree of integration with the poetic experiment and achievement as the earlier volume. In some degree these essays exhibit Eliot busy putting his lands in order. He has always had a sharp eye to posterity and is uneasy about how some of his early critical skirmishing may affect his subsequent reputation. This uneasiness is patent in the juxtaposition of "Milton I" (1936) and "Milton II" (1947). But it becomes almost embarrassingly obtrusive in "Goethe as Sage" (1955) where Eliot flogs his faculties in order to record his reverence for the sage for whom his distaste is quite evident.

Eliot's key role in his time has not been the result of his having any special theory or any particular set of concepts. He simply had the intelligence, the sensitivity, and the erudition to engage with our very rich civilization at all levels at once. His detractors have been people of some special concept or some special segment of sensibility. For those who like quantitative comparisons let it be said that to turn from Eliot to any critic in any period of the Western world is to be aware of their fragmentary and impoverished range of awareness. Eliot is no superman, but he made the most of the unexampled opportunities of our century. And our time has made accessible the entire cultures of the globe.

Very little French text is provided in the La Forgue volume, but the book is invaluable as a companion to Eliot study. First there are ninety pages of translations of poems and some excellent commentary on these, then some of the *Moral Tales* including *Hamlet*. There are selections from his art criticism, his Berlin diaries and his letters. The early poems are early Eliot:

Night falls, soothing to lascivious old men.  
My cat Mürr, hunched like some heraldic sphinx,  
Uneasily surveys, from his fantastic eyeball,  
The gradual ascent of the chlorotic moon.

The hour of children's prayers, when whoring Paris  
Hurls on to the pavement of every boulevard

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Her cold-breasted girls who wander with searching  
Animal eyes under the pale street lights.

There is an account of the great vogue of the famous nôtre Jean-Gaspard De-bureau (1796-1846) whose art inspired Laforgue's Pierrot. This moon figure of the eternal feminine was death itself: "The constant references to whiteness, sterility, and decay, however playful, do not spring from mere perversity, but reflect rather a concern with death as great as that of the English Metaphysical poets. The bone-white face of Pierrot, as expressionless as it is timeless, is the image of the full moon. It is also a death's-head animated by feeling."

The metaphysical puppet world of Yeats also gets illuminated from Laforgue. Eastern philosophy via Shopenhauer and Von Hartmann was as current as Freud and Jung today. The initial effect of Eastern metaphysics on Western art was to trigger a great variety of new invention in the arts. It is the new invention and not the dreary nihilism of the East that needs our attention in Flaubert, Mallarmé, Joyce, Pound, Eliot. And it has been the great distinction of Pound and Eliot that they have never relaxed their technical interests in favor of the philosophy itself.

University of Toronto

M. MARSHALL McLUHAN

### The Reign of Letters

*Présences contemporaines*, Vol. 3. By Pierre Brodin. Paris: Debresse.

IN HIS first two volumes of *Présences contemporaines* (cf. *Renascence*, Vol. X, No. 1, 46-7), Pierre Brodin presented a gallery of personalities whose works loom large on the contemporary literary scene by reason of their immediate presence and continuing influence. In this work, the third publication in the series, he adopts a different approach: tracing the main currents and themes of contemporary French letters, he divides his book into four parts, each part being devoted to one of the four post-World War I decades. So this latest contribution by Brodin, then, is historico-analytic rather than aesthetico-critical.

In describing the twenties as the period of illusion when jazzy carnivals were staged without a thought for the morrow and in the conviction that prosperity and gay Montmartre were here to stay, Brodin sees the era as one of brilliant revolt and dazzling variety accompanied by the cult of sincerity and a quest for adventure. It was, Maurice Sachs records in *Le Sabbat*, the moment of Montparnasse and *Boeuf sur le Toit*, the cabaret where the casual or curious visitor "could see Picasso, Radiguet, Cocteau, Milhaud, Fargue, Auric, Poulenc, Honegger, Sauguet, Satie, Jean Hugo, Breton, Aragon, Marie Laurencin, Léger, Lurçat, and the whole avant-garde of those years." The novel, for the most part lacking the somber hues of much non-French fiction, remained the vibrant traditional genre by reason of lending itself to experimentation and a documentary interpretation of the new scene. The theatre flourished too, of course, with Cocteau, Pagnol, Giraudoux, and numerous others. But it was verse which attained the real triumph for, as Blaise Cendrars has remarked, "from the Armistice to the Depression, that is to say from the death of Apollinaire to the death of those men of Wall Street who threw themselves out of the windows of skyscrapers, we see not only the triumph and vanity of money, but also of Poetry."

One is reminded, perhaps with a certain nostalgia, of how Tzara arrived at

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Paris in 1919 and proceeded to launch the French brand of Dada with Aragon and Soupault. The second stage was the victory of André Breton and the surrealists after 1921. Rimbaud, Freud, and Mallarmé became the heroes of the hour. It was the moment of Max Jacob, Léon-Paul Fargue, Duhamel, Salacrou, Thibaudet, and countless others. Of course, the four major writers, who might be viewed as links between the older and new modes of the Third Republic, were Claudel, Gide, Proust, and Valéry. But, in addition to these and the many other authors constituting the literary galaxy between November 11, 1918 and October, 1929, there were three men who managed to find publishers for titles that were not in tune with the times but which, it is easy to say in retrospect, gave an uncommonly strong hint of things to come: Bernanos, *Sous le Soleil de Satan*; Mauriac, *Thérèse Desqueyroux*; Julien Green, *Adrienne Mesurat*.

For other influences were beginning to make themselves felt in the thirties, and man's insufficiency was brought to the fore by the sobering events taking place on economic, political, and social levels. Individualism as a doctrine by which to live had begun to totter and, as early as 1932, Bergson published his *Les Deux Sources de la Morale et de la Religion*; Jacques Maritain proposed "an integral humanism" which should, to use his own words, "really and effectively respect human dignity." Emmanuel Mounier lent his voice to the anti-individualistic chorus too. Péguy and Barrès replaced the idols of the twenties although Gide and Proust retained much of their ascendancy. Literature was now in fact coming to be engaged to some collectivism, whether it were Christianity, Fascism, or Marxism; even Hitler found an adherent in Alphonse de Chateaubriant. Three new writers were coming into greater prominence: Malraux, Montherlant, and Saint-Exupéry. Martin du Gard continued the voluminous *Thibault*; Duhamel finished the fifth and final tome of his *Salavin*. A foreign note was added with the growing popularity of such American novelists as Caldwell, Dos Passos, Faulkner, and Hemingway. Why? There arose in France, with the growth of anguish and the desire for a raw heroism to cope with the prevailing defeat and despair, a renewed concern over the more fundamental aspects of life. America was held to be unencumbered by stultifying traditions; she had proven herself up to tasks of the first magnitude in a world which could be neither ridiculed nor ignored.

Brodin sees the forties as the *historic* decade, and there can scarcely be an argument with the opinion that the single fact of the forties was World War II, that the concomitant oppressions and violence provoked a literally epidemic sense of dread causing, in its turn, a strange and grim seriousness to be accorded to the absurd. The very incidents of life were suddenly the stuff of tragedy: bombings, flights, wounds, disease, surrender, occupation, death, concentration and P.O.W. camps, single and mass executions. Literature did not fail to bear the marks of the impact of these things, nor did it fail to reflect the sentiment that the world had become absurdly cruel and cruelly absurd. Even liberation became a joke, so much havoc did this charitable gesture wreak.

As in the first world conflict, literature suffered the loss of many of its practitioners: Nizan was killed in action; Politzer and Decour were shot by the Nazis; Prévost found death in the maquis; Desnos met his end in a concentration camp; Saint-Exupéry was shot down on a photographing mission in Southern France. Others committed suicide, were executed as collaborators, or disappeared into some unknown and self-imposed exile. However, the novel

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flourished as a result of these events. Nor were poets lacking: Eluard, Pierre Emmanuel, Loys Masson, Jules Supervielle.

After the war, the younger men are described by Brodin as taking one of three paths into the future: Marxism, personalism, or existentialism, all three being alike to the degree that they are "engagements" and their subscribers are "engaged." So once again after a war, one of the directions followed by writers is adherence to a cause, and one of the principal values comes to be sincerity (cf. Olivier Meursault in Camus' *L'Etranger*, and Anouilh's *Antigone*). Writers hold to the argument that characters should be themselves rather than creations of their author, that they should think and act in an honesty of their own (cf. the Sartre-Mauriac controversy). As after the first war too, there is a fervent plea for solidarity among men and a communion for mankind in a world that can turn so hostile in a moment, even for a whim. In *La Peste*, Tarrou speaks of sympathy and understanding; charity in the Christian sense has reassumed its position as a virtue. René Char, André Frénaud, Guillevic, and Jean Rousselot voice similar sentiments as a result of their experiences with the holocaust. Jean Cayrol makes friendship and harmony among men the core of *Je vivrai l'amour des autres*.

Part IV, "Les Années 50," is brief and sees the present decade as a continuation of the forties in many respects. Sartre continues to exert an influence, but his cult is described as diminishing. Gascar, Dhôtel, and Nimier are named as the new writers of more than ordinary stature. Faulkner and Kafka are considered as no longer being omnipresent forces. There is a tendency to be less revolutionary, to accept what is absurd in life with the same simplicity with which "thunder, the theory of relativity, and the hydrogen bomb" are accepted. Along with these changes, existentialism is reported as losing its fascination while certain 1925 themes are revived. What is most persistent is the sense of the tragic, an alertness towards the meanings that things conceal.

There is much more to this present volume, which offers in such brief compass no fewer than forty-three facets of the past forty years. Besides affording a revealing bird's eye view of an involved period, it is an excellent complement to the two previous studies. Perhaps most of all, it furnishes ample proof that France, in spite of recent trials and failures, has continued to maintain a literary prestige that is both formidable and deserved. The French may have lost the war, the peace, and their colonial empire, but their "gloire" in letters remains untarnished for all who would stop running long enough to read.

SPIRE PITOU

### Stiff As a Board

*From an Altar Screen: El Retablo: Tales from New Mexico.* By Fray Angelico Chavez, O.F.M. Farrar, Straus and Cudahy. \$3.75.

THIS IS an attractive book: designed by Marshall Lee; illustrated by Peter Hurd; dressed with three styles of type and four colors, it is an aesthetically pleasing job of book publication for which the designer, illustrator, printer and publisher should be praised.

Unfortunately it is not a good book.

Expectations aroused by the physical appearance and the praise on the dust-jacket—from Paul Horgan to whom the book is dedicated—are disappointed

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one by one, seven times, by each of the tales. It is not a good book because the people in it do not live, because it is awkwardly written, and because, finally, the serious thematic intention has been oversimplified in order to fit the seven tales into a total pattern. The idea behind the pattern is to show how a patron saint provides the necessary aid or counsel to a namesake at the moment of his distress.

The author himself—described as a “well-known Franciscan writer and painter”—provides a clue to the failure and a reason for it in a note he adds to the end of the book. These seven tales from a “retablo,” he writes, which may be defined according to New Mexican Spanish usage as “a sacred picture crudely painted on a board.” He goes on to say that “the whole thing is more of a tableau . . . picturing the soul of a simple people at various periods across a couple of centuries . . . less a collection of short stories than a running series of accounts about different generations in the same general locale. If the stiff *santos* sometimes step out and move about, quite at home, among the living characters, it is because these folks lived so close to them that they saw and heard them plainly in their life’s moment of deepest distress, or else might have seen them.”

To repeat, the author has given us the terms of his own failure. The “living characters” do not live but remain as stiffly one-dimensional as those of the retablo “crudely painted on a board.” The characters do not speak in living voices but recite from deep in history in wooden tones we might expect if participants in a tableau were permitted speech.

The descriptions of the New Mexican landscape, conventionally adequate with their “leaden skies” and analogies between landscape and painter’s canvas, jewels (emeralds instead of pearls), precious metals or fabrics, miss the peculiar and powerful beauty of the Southwest which might have helped the author atone for his failure to provide the characters with life.

But the serious weakness of the book still remains its lack of life and so it fails on any terms including the author’s own. The “life’s moments of deepest distress” carry no more significant emotional engagement for character or for reader than, say, the momentary flurry of missing the morning bus to work. Described in moments of joy, anger, despair, love, the characters remain described, not alive. And it is the author’s fault. He will not let them live their own lives because he must hold them to his schematic intention while instructing (one might say catechizing) the reader.

For example, consider the first tale, “The Bell That Sang Again” tells of the casting of a bell which rings beautifully, but stirs jealousy between the dashing captain who cast it and the husband of Ysabel, daughter of the village leader who had commissioned the bell for the church of Santa Ysabel. Captain and husband kill each other. Ysabel curses the bell which then gives off only a leaden sound until Ysabel has a change of heart and gives birth to the child of her dead husband. Her change of heart occurs because of the dramatic intervention of Santa Ysabel and at the emotionally intense moment when the young woman prepares to throw herself from a high cliff. The widow speaks: “Then you must be Santa Ysabel!” The young woman cried, not too much surprised to find herself sitting next to St. Elizabeth, the mother of John the Baptist, whose story Father Bartolo had so vividly painted when the church was dedicated and lately touched upon at the blessing of the bell.”

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So much for dramatic recognition, emotional intensity and religious instruction. The pleasant old woman chats, on the cliff-top in the night, in a folksy way about her son John and her husband Zachary—all the while rolling a cigaret of native tobacco and dried corn husks (the touch of reality for "simple souls"?).

One more example of this awkward, self-conscious, character-killing writing should be sufficient to make the point. In the last tale, "The Colonel and the Santo," a contemporary colonel and a chaplain are searching for the family of a soldier who was killed in an act of heroism which saved the colonel's life. During the jeep ride across the New Mexican landscape, the story of the dead youth is told by the colonel who mistakenly calls the boy a "Mexican." The Padre, offered as an understanding man and a guide both geographical and spiritual, makes the following reply:

"One cannot go by looks alone, sir, especially with the Latin races. But even if Cash did have a remote strain of Indian, which is no disgrace, this does not make him a Mexican. The famed Will Rogers, whom you mentioned this morning as distant kin of yours, was a quarter Indian. Does this make him a Mexican? Of course not. This is because the word "Mexican" denotes a nationality and a culture, and a very superior one. A citizen of Mexico, whether he be white, red, black, or mixed, is a true Mexican and proud of it. He might make social distinctions, but not racial ones. It is we reputedly democratic Americans who make them, and incorrect ones at that."

The critical point here is that, in addition to the stilted speech, such a didactic digression is intrusive and destructive to the kind of "simple" tale which the author is trying to tell. Further, this example is symptomatic of a far graver fault in the book: a tone of condescension both intellectual and spiritual which implies that the faith of simple folk is, indeed, simple.

If a writer learns by his mistakes, then there is an important lesson here which all of us, including Fray Angelico Chavez, should take deeply into our hearts: simplicity, *finally*, is not simple. One thinks of Flaubert's "A Simple Heart" as a study of a "simple soul," but the style and content so merge as to produce a significant truth, a profound truth, which includes the complexity of poor Félicité's devotion to others, to her parrot Loulou, and to God.

But the sad truth in these seven tales is that faith, which is paradoxically the most simple and most complex of experiences, remains only simple. It remains a matter of a *deus ex machina* plaster-cast saint who materializes at the propitious moment, not so much because of the intensity of the desire of the person in distress as because the subject is drunk (José in "The Lean Years"), or recovering from a state of suspended animation brought on by drink and a chill (Corsinio in "The Wake of Don Corsinio"), or decides to gather wood rather than play at a child's burial (Facundo in "The Fiddler and the Angelito"). And the rewards are on the same level: Don Corsinio's material goods are restored as is his place in the community; José's lean years of fidelity are rewarded with a new wife ("a fine woman") and prosperous years in Las Vegas.

And, at the end of these tales, the reader's disappointment is sharpened rather than dulled because he has discovered, buried among the faults, hints

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enough to make him realize—as the author must have realized—that here was sufficient subject matter to lead to rich experience and significant insights.

Montana State University

DOUGLAS BANKSON

### And End and a Beginning

*Charles du Bos.* By Jean Mouton. Paris: Desclée de Brouwer.

A memorial book rarely succeeds in producing a portrait as revealing as the one here achieved. Nor is this effect obtained only through Jean Mouton's familiarity with the household, though no doubt many a reader will appreciate such descriptions as that of du Bos' apartment, the decoration of which throws light on the personality of the occupant. Rather, the impression of live reality comes from Mouton's re-enacting of the inspiration of du Bos.

In this book, as in all of the work of du Bos, the effort of the writer has been to obtain a view of the Self. What is meant by Self is no quantitative or peculiar characteristic, nor could it pretend to grasp the invisible soul. But discernment of this metaphysical being, the Self—though no adequate rational elaboration of its nature has yet been produced—offers to our perception basic manifestations of the spiritual part of man both in its universal and its individual aspects.

Who could deny that antique magic, a large part of Greek philosophy, the wisdom of the Humanists, even the function granted by some American Indians to their sorcerers, attest to a thirst for a communication of spiritual potentialities of man beyond what is directly felt, thought, enacted, even beyond what is revealed and taught? But men, the inventors of language, are its prisoners: the "beyond" has escaped them. In subsequent times, this awkward attempt of our civilization seemed to give way under the impetus of naturalism, materialism, and determinism. It remains to the honor of the symbolists to have picked up the trail again in the meanderings of the conscious and the caverns of the newly discovered unconscious. Charles du Bos affirmed his liking for the Symbolist period, regretting not to have lived entirely within it.

Yet the Symbolists, who were artists rather than philosophers, had done little to rule out the implication that the correspondences they established between the world of the intelligence and ordinary reality did not constitute an invented kingdom superseding reality. Charles du Bos, aware of this danger, made minute probings—which, by the way, account for his long-winded style and his choice of criticism over other literary genres—in order to gain access to the privileged ground where the Self, apprehended entirely as original and temporal, is rich in determinant powers. His discoveries, to be truthful, suffer from multiplicity. Yet it is enough that each one be authentic. In the contemporary attention to intuition, du Bos assured its being practiced and its assuming new responsibilities. We come to realize better every day that, liberating us from the cruel pursuit of an ever receding "beyond," intuition places in our midst the marvels of a non-dislocated human nature. That is why the work of du Bos was sensed as vital from the start.

It is no wonder that Jean Mouton feels inclined to report on du Bos' personal relations with life and death: these relations attest to his grasp of human destiny.

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In so doing, Mouton is led to disclose du Bos' thoughts on love, happiness, action, art, social and political life—for all these things follow from life. Literature itself, du Bos said, is mostly "life proceeding to know itself." François Mauriac has commented, "This Charles du Bos, whom we used to reproach for being out of life, how full of life he appears to us now that he has left."

That there is a soul, the development of which is not assured without keen awareness and responsibility, was the basic belief of du Bos. This spiritual concern directed both his actions and his perception of profound intimations in nature and in works of art. Ultimately it achieved a perfect blending of everyday and artistic life. Most of us treat truth, goodness, beauty with a sort of segregation which results in stultified morality, superficiality, and escapism; Charles du Bos saw human life as justified by knowledge, love, and goodness, in their essential unity. His religious conversion was inevitable. His views from then on were quite consistent. He treated love neither as a panacea nor as an incentive to destruction; he emphasized the potentialities for human development inherent in suffering and death, thus considering death not as a negative event but as the most valuable experience of life. All of these ideas, which can be detected in his writings, are underscored by Mouton. Speaking of du Bos' long afflictions and reporting on his last moments, Mouton makes us see that they caused no discord in his awareness of the connection between the earthly contingency and the eternal realm of the soul.

The book is the new Volume I of the series "Les Iles," which brought forward new writers of significance in the period before World War II. It constitutes a more than satisfactory reopening of the series.

PAULE SIMON

### Sin in the Sagebrush

*Hawthorne's Tragic Vision.* By Roy R. Male. University of Texas Press. \$3.75.

ROY R. MALE lends Hawthorne criticism a brilliant but erratic hand. Circling through cactus and quicksand, he spins a loop of theories which dazzle the eye but catch his own booted feet. Describing woman's double role as temptress and redeemer, who fosters awareness through sin and sorrow, he trips when he claims Hawthorne interpreted Original Sin "as the mutual love of man and woman." If love is sin, what constitutes virtue?

Basing his book on a formula of moral growth (men sin, suffer, and sometimes see), Male declares "there is no simple formula" for it. Affirming that moral growth depends on "an act of will," he later declares its dependence on "a subtle interaction between heredity and environment." Assuming Hawthorne thought moral growth "cannot occur" without sin and suffering, he misquotes from *The Marble Faun*, "Sometimes the instruction comes without the sorrow." Claiming that truth "can only be grasped in its total living context," he ignores the bulk of Hawthorne's life and writings and disregards important facts in the nine tales and four novels he finds worthy of study. Deprecating the distinction between the novel and the romance, he nonetheless uses it. Adopting a neo-orthodox pose, he declares love a sin, claims Hawthorne thought Catholicism feminine and Protestantism masculine, misuses a term like "dark night of the

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soul," and labels the paradox of the fortunate fall a "fallacious formula" although he bases his book on it.

In sudden confusion, Male calls Beatrice Rappaccini "damned" and "foredoomed" yet pictures her rising "pure" to heaven. Although Hawthorne satirized Giovanni's unreason, Male declares Hawthorne rejected reason as man's governing faculty. To prove Pearl "a holy spirit" he cites a passage which praises her externals only, although Hawthorne went on to show demonism beneath. Having confused Ethan Brand with Satan, Male overlooks Chillingworth's diabolism. Uncritically repeating other critics' errors, he minimizes the grandeur of Aylmer's genius, the beauty of Warland's butterfly, and the genuineness of Tobias Pearson's conversion. In declaring youths' surnames irrelevant yet finding a war on land in Warland's, he forgets himself. His footnotes are few, and proof of the thesis is scanty. In applying his basic formula, Male too often fails to define either the sin that caused, or the insight that emerged from, the suffering. When characters fail to attain "a tragic vision," as in *The Blithedale Romance* or "Young Goodman Brown," he offers no explanation.

Chiefly valuable are Male's knack of finding new meaning in forgotten phrases and symbols, his claim that "home" means integrated "religious experience," his stress on organic intuitionism in *The Scarlet Letter*, his break with "fatalist" critics who remove free will from Hawthorne's psychology, and his steady concern with Hawthorne's moral and religious position—which he defines as "an offbeat traditionalism" because his "emphasis was not so much upon God's grace as it was upon man's struggle to achieve it." Because its virtues outweigh its defects, *Hawthorne's Tragic Vision*—radiating wit, originality, suggestiveness, and insight—repays inspection.

University of Wisconsin

RICHARD COANDA

## Cosmos and Prism

*Trends and Styles in Twentieth Century French Literature*. By Helmut Hatzfeld. The Catholic University Press. \$4.75.

**I**N A revealing introduction, Helmut Hatzfeld states: To present contemporary French literature since 1900 as a sequence of historical developments seems to me a somewhat premature enterprise. Therefore I chose to show it as a phenomenological prism of persistent and still existing trends reducible to a unity. The unity becomes visible in the literary concept of a superreality which transcends the individual consciousness and the external cosmos.

Thus, conceptually, formally and culturally, French literature can be reduced to a kind of *anti-réalisme*.

The provisional refusal to face a simple, given external reality has led to the constant use of three new technical procedures in French literature: The *monologue intérieur* invented by Edouard Dujardin (born 1861) in his novel *Les Lauriers sont coupés*; the-stream-of-consciousness technique stemming from the *Ulysses* of James Joyce (1882-1942); and the simultaneous narration of different events which was used for the first time in *Manhattan Transfer* by John R. Dos Passos.

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Under the heading of "Individual and Group in Tension," the author discusses, in chapter I, "collectivism" as a "literary idea." Jules Romains' "unanimisme" is given the lion's share, and each of the twenty-seven volumes of *Les Hommes de bonne volonté* is summarized. *Les Thibault* by Roger Martin du Gard and *La Chronique des Pasquier* receive a similar treatment. André Malraux is presented as "under the fascination of the mass spirit," whereas Henry de Montherlant is "the champion of a super-individualistic Nietzschean *hérosme pur*." Antoine de Saint-Exupéry praises "peacetime sport as daring spirit, as a danger, and as a value." Helmut Hatzfeld has attempted to recall the names of most writers who contributed socialistic or collectivistic works, from Charles Péguy to the exponents of *L'Univers concentrationnaire* (David Rousset, Pierre Gascar . . .).

In sharp contrast with what precedes, chapter II echoes "The voices of sex, earth and clan." Comtesse Anna de Noailles and Gabrielle Colette are heralded as "the proper pioneers along this line," but Maurice Barrès, Léon Daudet, Jean Giono, Charles Ferdinand Ramuz, the Tharauds, Albert Camus are given recognition as well as writers who more recently joined in the chorus, such as Maurice Genevoix whose novel, *Fatou Cissé* is analyzed.

In Chapter III, dealing with: "Introspection. New aspects of love. Acte gratuit," the author declares: "The outstanding writer of the century along the lines just mentioned will remain for a long time Marcel Proust" and tackles the task of discussing the sixteen volumes of *A la recherche du temps perdu*. After concluding: "The force which transforms and transfigures space and time in Proust's work is art as a high realization of life's values" (p. 80), the author checks Proust's "exploitation of the subconscious" with that of François Mauriac and Julien Green and examines Henri-René Lenormand's dramas. "The problem of the fundamental misunderstanding between man and woman . . . elaborated in a series of novelistic and dramatic plots" is then considered. André Gide, who "seems to have been aware as early as Freud himself of the most harrowing urge of all, the *acte gratuit, la fatalité intérieure*" is portrayed as "the rediscoverer of the tremendous superreality of Hell, partly—and this is unfortunate—as the Devil's advocate by rendering sin and crime immune to moral condemnation" (pp. 106-107). Different aspects of the *acte gratuit* are detected in Jean Genêt, Albert Camus, Jules Romains, Georges Duhamel and Jean Cocteau.

In chapter IV, we discover the more elusive "Forms of Evasion: Exoticism, Fancy, Dream." After introducing American exoticism (Luc Durstain, Paul Morand, . . .) and sketching the plots of Céline's *Voyage au bout de la nuit*, Jules Romains' *Donogoo-Tonka* and Malraux's *La Voie royale*, the author gives a sensitive analysis of Alain-Fournier's escape "into a romantic reality of his own." "In the case of *Le Grand Meaulnes* the transposition of a real experience into a novel is perfect." Jean Giraudoux is recognized as the "master" of "lively dream-associations," and modern exponents of escapism are presented in the wake of these last two "magician-like writers."

"Existentialist 'Engagement'" is submitted to a critical examination in chapter V. The literary and philosophical studies are here focused on the works of Jean-Paul Sartre, Albert Camus, Simone de Beauvoir and Jean Anouilh.

In Chapter VI, dedicated to "Spirituality," the great representatives of this aspect of human aspirations are Paul Claudel and Georges Bernanos. "The Christian existentialist Gabriel Marcel represents a link between Catholics and

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those non-Catholics who are sympathetic to the core of Christianity" (p. 184). In the younger generation, Jean Cayrol, "a Catholic Sartre" succeeds in "creating with his style a contagious *angoisse* based on two leitmotifs: *Lazare* and *Samedi Saint*." Jean Cayrol's spirituality finds a tragic expression in *Poèmes de la nuit et du brouillard*. Among the Catholic lyricists, Helmut Hatzfeld singles out Patrice de La Tour du Pin and Pierre Emmanuel.

In Chapter VII, devoted to "Abstract Art and Pure Poetry," the "more rational supporters of this poetry" (Valéry, St.-John Perse) are shown to "have their roots in the *fin-de-siècle* symbolism of the nineteenth century" (p. 196), while "the irrational pioneers of futuristic, cubistic, dadaistic attempts (André Breton, Apollinaire, Carco) try to reproduce dream-worlds through word metaphors, as we have seen in our discussion of literary infantilism (chapter four)" (p. 196). After attempting to find definitions for *poésie pure*, théâtre pur, "an inconceivable *prose pure*," and *un cinéma pur*, the author sums up his findings in chapter VIII: "Collective Stylistic Achievements" before concluding in the "Epilogue": "The preponderance of the problem novel or rather the novel-essay seems to the historian of literature an incontestable proof that he is confronted with what might be called an arguing literature. . . . One discovers nothing less than the desperate revolutionary denial of God; but this denial is accompanied by an equally desperate desire for Him."

When reading *Trends and Styles in Twentieth Century Literature*, one must not look for original theories, new "rapprochements" or revelations of any sort. The reader feels that he has at hand a careful and rather thorough survey of French contemporary literature. The author is seldom as bold as to formulate his own judgments, but he very skilfully coordinates the views of authoritative critics into a coherent picture. The general plan of the book is somewhat artificial, however, and arbitrary groupings make it necessary to study a given author in different perspectives, so that various aspects of his production are scattered in so many parts of the treatise.

The critical apparatus of the book, very cleverly planned, was compiled in a scholarly manner and is presented both efficiently and effectively. Each chapter is equipped with notes gathered in an appendix at the end of the book. For each quotation, the reference is given, so that each person interested in a given topic has at hand a short but up-to-date bibliography. The General Bibliography divided into three parts—the first giving a list of general works, the second listing essays dealing with trends, and the third enumerating monographs and significant studies and articles dealing with individual authors—will be extremely useful for professors in planning their courses and to students in orienting their research.

For the reading public, the book will be quite valuable as a work of reference and an introduction to French contemporary literature.

University of California

MARIE-LOUISE DUFRENOY

## BOOK REVIEWS

### Un Convivio

*High Points in the History of Italian Literature.* By Domenico Vittorini. David McKay Co. \$4.75.

DOMENICO VITTORINI'S book is remarkable for its attentive documentation and skillful organization. The purpose of this collection of essays, which touches upon the outstanding authors and the main currents of Italian literature, is to share in the general revival in the humanities and to awaken in the public an interest in Italian culture.

The twenty-three critical chapters which comprise the book are arranged chronologically, and they span the whole development of the literature of Italy from Dante to Benedetto Croce, Luigi Pirandello and other twentieth-century authors. Several of the essays bear on Dante: his contribution to aesthetics, the historical reality of the *Dolce Stil Nuovo*, Dante and courtly language, lights and shadows in Dante's *Vita Nuova*, and Dante's concept of love. Authors and subjects discussed in some of the other essays include: Francesca da Rimini and the *Dolce Stil Nuovo*, Leonardo Bruni Arentino and humanism, realistic elements in Tasso's *Aminta*, Giacomo Leopardi, realism during the romantic age, Alessandro Manzoni, modern Italian drama, Luigi Pirandello, the development of the Italian novel, and Benedetto Croce and criticism.

Vittorini combines, in these delightful essays, not only abundant food for discussion and reflection but also frequently appended and scholarly evaluations which bring forth his learning and critical perception. These studies, because they are written in a style which is readable, charming, and graceful, should prove interesting and rewarding to scholars and to students of Italian literature.

While there can be no question of summarizing such a comprehensive work, we may at least note those sections which are particularly impressive, either for the fresh light they bring to bear on familiar subjects, or for the skill with which they explore complex problems. Of special interest is Vittorini's excellent analysis of Dante's contribution to aesthetics. In his first and third essays, Vittorini gives critical studies of Dante's theoretical idea of poetry. He disagrees with the conclusions of the great critic and historian of aesthetics, Benedetto Croce, who, in his *Estetica*, believes that Dante's contribution to literary art did not go beyond the application to poetry in the vernacular of the four senses: literal, allegorical, moral, and anagogical. Nor does our author agree with the admiration that George Saintsbury bestows on the poet. In his *History of Criticism*, the latter reduces Dante to a rhetorician, new, magnificent, and original, but a rhetorician nevertheless. Dissenting from the opinions of these eminent critics, Professor Vittorini proposes the thesis that Dante's significance rests on his consideration of content as the determining factor of artistic form in poetry. It is through this fact that Dante leaves the precincts of rhetoric and enters the field of aesthetics. Dante looks upon poetry as an indissoluble whole: content and form, vocabulary and metric. His division of poetry into courtly and popular, into tragic and comic style, rests on his belief that beauty is related to ethics and ugliness to immorality. The very significant corollary that he derives from the identity of ethics and beauty is the conclusion that, in the art of poetry, content determines form. The new poetry that Dante envisages in the *De Vulgari Eloquentia* should relinquish vulgar love affairs to the immature and rough songsters of popular verse. It should possess depth of thought, a grand

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style, a winged metrical form, and a nobility of vocabulary. Noble poetry, for Dante, was to deal with noble content. It is on this basis that he concludes that courtly poetry should concern itself only with the useful (*Salus*), the pleasurable (*Venus*), and the rational (*Virtus*). In brief then, Dante's theory can be reduced to the following concepts: Poetry is conditioned by the subject matter that it expresses. A noble content needs a noble language and a noble metric form; a mediocre and common subject needs a mediocre and common language, written in simple rhyme.

Another essay of interest is the one which studies the three letters that the Italian humanist, Coluccio Salutati, addressed to Thomas Arundel, archbishop of Canterbury. These letters, covering the period from 1399 to 1403, gives us a clear insight of the conditions of England and Italy during those years as well as a revealing light on Salutati's temperament and the nature and forms of his humanism.

In his essay entitled: "Pirandello and the Concept of Reality," Vittorini analyzes the Italian author's meaning of reality. Pirandello felt a complete definition should embrace not only the use of Greek myths (classicism), not only historical material (romanticism), not only material observed in the society and environment in which the artist lives (naturalism), but also whatever dreams and enchanted or awesome places the artist evokes from his imagination (contemporary art). Reality resides not in the material used, but in the life that the magic power of imagination can awaken in it. Art, for Pirandello, rests on a higher plane than actual life. It is capable of giving to the creative artist a completeness of existence that actual life does not give him. It is the vision and realization of this more complete and different form of life which constitutes realism. Realism, concludes Pirandello, is an aesthetic category and not the material that some artists have used. An artist can reach realism either by using ideal patterns or actual ones. He is completely free in his choice that is dictated only by his own temperament, mood and experience.

In spite of the author's extensive documentation, there are a few rather surprising shortcomings in this book. One wonders why, for instance, the names of Petrarch and Boccaccio are mentioned only superficially and in passing. This reviewer feels that the reader could have profited by Vittorini's keen insight and critical judgments had he included essays on these two eminent authors. Then, too, it is unfortunate that Vittorini's searching scholarship is somewhat marred by his very long essay on modern Italian drama. This section, the weakest of his book, is nothing more than a monotonous compendium of names of playwrights and titles of their works. Really, it adds nothing to an otherwise excellent book. Would it not have been more profitable had Vittorini selected the outstanding representative from each of the schools of modern drama and shown at length how each mirrors the dramatic school to which he belongs? All in all, this is a very substantial, illuminating book, which no one interested in Italian literature can afford to disregard.

Iona College

RUDOLPH J. MONDELLI

## BOOK REVIEWS

### Patmore Portrayed

*The Mind and Art of Coventry Patmore.* By J. C. Reid. Macmillan. \$7.00.

LET IT BE said at once that this is the best work on Coventry Patmore that has as yet been published. There are several biographies from Champneys to Oliver, and in some of these there are rather pathetic attempts to appraise Patmore's worth as a poet. Two volumes of criticism—*The Idea of Coventry Patmore* by Osbert Burdett, and *Patmore: A Study in Poetry* by Frederick Page—are scholarly works and valuable contributions to Patmoreana. But neither can compare with the present volume for comprehensiveness of treatment. There is no labored discussion concerning the identity of "the angel" in "The Angel in the House," only the simple, obvious statement that it was not the poet's wife, Emily, but Love, messenger from God to Man. In alluding to the relationship between Alice Meynell and Patmore the author is in complete agreement with the late Viola Meynell's inescapable conclusion in *Francis Thompson and Wilfrid Meynell*, which he quotes and adds: "with Alice Meynell Patmore was striving for some sort of intimate spiritual relationship incapable of fulfilment, but a type essentially different from the 'physical falling in love' of Derek Patmore."

It is refreshing in this day of lawlessness and unintelligible "modern poetry" to read a sympathetic presentation of Patmore's view of life which he applied literally to his poetry: "The more vigorous and various the life, the more astringent and elaborate must be the law of obedience to which life expresses itself." His erudite and learned criticism of prosody and his valuable contribution to the subject are admirably summarized.

The *Unknown Eros*, the essence of Patmore, is not treated as an unrelated miscellany, but as a sequence leading to a climax in the Psyche Odes—"as complex and as serious a work as was written in English in the nineteenth century." "It speaks to the twentieth century," says the author, "with a clearer voice than it spoke to Patmore's own age." But it is a voice, it would seem, crying in the wilderness.

The most serious fault in the volume is the estimate of Francis Thompson as critic and poet. Says the author: "Thompson is a fairly typical nineteenth century 'appreciator' whose weakness as a critic lies in his lack of a body of principles and a consistent critical standpoint." Such a statement may find slight justification if Thompson's criticism is limited to the slender volume of prose in Wilfrid Meynell's edition of Thompson's works. But it is altogether untenable in view of the vast amount of Thompson's criticism recently discovered, which reveals him as a critic of no small stature, possessed of a most consistent critical standpoint and unmistakably sound principles upon which his critical judgments are formed.

In citing Patmore's criticism of Thompson's poetry the author quotes disproportionately from what Patmore has to say concerning his fellow-poet's faults. Patmore had already spoken of the sequence to Alice Meynell as "a series of poems which St. John of the Cross might have addressed to St. Theresa," and characterized Thompson's qualities as a poet, as those "which ought to place him, even should he do no more than he has done, in the permanent ranks of fame, with Cowley and with Crashaw." It is to be doubted that "claims made subsequently for Thompson's poetry by some of his co-religionists"—to which

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the author alludes disparagingly—have ever exceeded such praise as this, of Thompson's genius.

When Patmore refers to Thompson's throwing about him "handfuls of stars" and swinging the earth as "a trinket from his wrist," and then proceeds to call them "cheap sublimities" compared with a line quoted from Aeschylus, he gives a classical example of faulty criticism. But the author of this volume quotes it with approval and adds: "'Cheap substitutes' is a shrewd phrase, for the general effect of Thompson's poetry is, in fact, to reduce the cosmic and the sublime to the status of playthings." It would be futile—and we hope unnecessary—to attempt a correction of such a fantastic appraisal of Thompson's poetry. It will be sufficient merely to call the role of some of the poems in which Thompson has treated the cosmic and sublime: "The Hound of Heavn," "By Reason of Thy Law," "The Dread of Height," "Orient Ode," "From the Night of Fore-being," "An Anthem of Earth," "Laus Amara Doloris," "Of Nature: Laud and Plaint," and the whole sequence "Ultima."

There is some slight confusion in the presentation of Patmore's views on celibacy. In one place (p. 36) we read "while married love is accepted [by Patmore] as a great and holy love, a foreshadowing of the union with God, dedicated celibacy is a love of at least equal and perhaps higher virtue." In another (p. 80) it is stated: "although he [Patmore] does not attack celibacy as such in his verse or prose, he takes a somewhat disdainful and patronizing view of it." On the contrary, some of the most glowing tributes to celibacy in English poetry are Patmore's, such as the opening lines of "*Deliciae Sapientiae de Amore*," and the famous passage in "*Legem Tuam Dilexi*"—too long to quote.

The author mistakenly speaks of "virgin marriage" as "an un-Catholic idea" inconceivable for devout Catholics. The marriage of the Blessed Virgin and St. Joseph was such a marriage as were other such marriages entered into by holy persons—Edward the Confessor of England and his wife Editha, for instance—and the Church has regarded them with approval. An able treatment of this question is the doctoral dissertation of Rev. John C. Ford, S.J., *The Validity of Virginal Marriage*, the conclusion of which is: "A marriage contracted with a condition to preserve virginity forever can be a true marriage."

In stating that Patmore burned all the copies of *Odes*, 1868, "save one or two which his daughter Emily put aside," the author is mistaken. In the Patmore Collection at Boston College there are three copies and several others are known to have survived the conflagration. References to "the Grantham Library in Sussex" are probably typographical errors for the private library of the Meynells at Greatham.

Boston College

TERENCE L. CONNOLLY, S.J.

## Picture of Voltaire

*Voltaire, sa vie et son oeuvre.* By Fernand Vial. Paris: Marcel Didier.

THE bulk of Vial's thick book (about 700 pages long) consists of selections. Excepting the short texts, such as poems, letters, and the essay on taste, only *Mérope* and *Le Temple du goût* are presented in their entirety.

## BOOK REVIEWS

The life of Voltaire is sketched out in the first part of the book, serving as a general introduction to the second and main part of the volume, which is devoted to the works. The eight sections of this part consist of discussions and texts; they present (with the texts indicated in parentheses) Voltaire the dramatist (*Mérope*), the epic poet (*La Henriade*), the historian (*Le Siècle de Louis XIV*, *Avant propos de l'Essai sur les moeurs*), the *philosophe* and propagator of new ideas (*Lettres philosophiques*), the philosophic story teller (*Zadig*), the literary critic (*Le Temple du goût*, the article "Goût" from the *Dictionnaire philosophique, Commentaire sur Corneille*), the lyrical and satirical poet (twelve poems), and finally the letter writer (twenty-five letters to various correspondents from 1737 to 1776).

The discussions preceding the texts vary in length and purpose. The lyrical and satirical poet and the letter writer are briefly introduced in about two pages each. Voltaire the historian is discussed in twenty-one pages, the epic writer, the dramatist, the story teller, and the literary critic, in about ten pages each. The most thorough treatment—sixty pages long—is accorded to Voltaire the *philosophe*. For every genre, Vial shows Voltaire's achievement, describes his technique, and defines his originality. The discussions for the sections on drama, history, the *contes philosophiques*, and the essays and treatises embodying his philosophic ideas are the most comprehensive and take into account the most important contributions in each of these genres. Another common feature of these sections is that the texts chosen as specimens are preceded by individual introductions dealing with the genesis, sources, and publication of the texts and stressing their significance, merits and defects.

The selections made by Vial adequately illustrate the many-sided genius of Voltaire. It is regrettable, however, that no sample of Voltaire's longer philosophic poems is included, although Vial does discuss very briefly the *Poème sur le désastre de . . . Lisbonne* and the *Poème sur la loi naturelle*.

The biographical sketch is sufficiently detailed to allow us to follow Voltaire with interest in his many residences and sojourns, and in his activities as author, friend and foe, defender of victims of injustice and protector of younger writers, business man and feudal lord, to mention only the most important. It ends with a portrait highlighting his insatiable curiosity, his youthful enthusiasm even in his old age, the contradictions of his character, the nature of his patriotism, his culture, and his skill as a writer.

As for the notes, not all the texts are annotated with equal thoroughness and care. Best edited are *Mérope*, the excerpts from *La Henriade*, and *Le Siècle de Louis XIV*. In the other texts a number of rare words and difficult expressions (such as *la magistrature près, frontignan, or rogatons*) are left unexplained. Yet they would puzzle the advanced undergraduate and even some of the graduate students for whom one supposes the book is primarily intended. These students would also expect more of the many proper names and allusions to be briefly identified. Moreover they will wonder why some Latin and Italian quotations and expressions are translated and others are not.

Considering the length of the text, misprints are very rare and can easily be corrected by the reader. There is one, however, which is plausible enough to be passed over and it should be noted: p. 420 read *anime dans vos discours* and not *aimé*.

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From Vial's book a true picture of Voltaire emerges. Though understandably critical toward his subject, Vial does not vilify him or minimize his literary and other achievements. He makes a conscientious effort to present Voltaire's virtues as well as his defects.

The Catholic University of America

ALESSANDRO S. CRISAFULLI

### Conversions

*Convertis du XX<sup>e</sup> Siècle.* By F. Lelotte, S.J., and others. 2 vols. Paris: Casterman.

THE editors present these two volumes by reason of the thousands of conversions to Roman Catholicism that are taking place presently—up to 120,000 annually, for example, in the United States alone. The men and women who constitute the subject matter for each essay come from many lands and many professions, but they have all arrived at the same *Credo* and so endow the book with a unity that is of form as well as of spirit. This is a welcome achievement in a day when so many symposium-volumes are printed in spite of their lacking one or the other of these two unifying denominators.

The first volume gives what is known about the conversions of sixteen men and women, and this event in their lives is oriented to their previous and subsequent experiences and works. Nine of the individuals are of French origin, but other nationalities are represented: English thrice; Dutch, German, Japanese, and Russian once each. As might be expected, writers are most frequently encountered although there are two painters, two physicians, a teacher, a biologist, a student, and an adventurer. Some had already gained fame in their chosen fields at the moment of their conversion, but others were known only to a few as brilliant young men or women.

And how far did these individuals go in their quest? Eleven remained entirely within the laity, two were buried as Dominicans of the Third Order; two became monastics, one became a nun. Readers of *Renascence* will be familiar with many of the names that furnish the chapter headings: Léon Bloy, Max Jacob, Francis Jammes, Thomas Merton, *et al.* But there are also notices for Takashi Nagai, Charles Nicolle, Edith Stein among others. The occasions of the conversions are noted, too, but always with the caution that conversion is not a matter to be effected "between the saddle and the ground." Many times, however, the first movement is traced to a particular circumstance: the reading of a book, a sudden or old friendship, a visit to a church, a chance trip to Lourdes or Italy.

The second volume follows the same pattern: fifteen essays tethered to one stake. Jacques Madaule is author of the pages devoted to Paul Claudel, Abel Moreau of those concerned with Charles Péguy. Other literary personages furnishing pertinent cause for consideration are Gertrude von le Fort, Ernest Psichari, Evelyn Waugh, Adolphe Retté, Giovanni Papini, Pierre van der Meer de Walcheren, and Charles Du Bos. The others among the fifteen are Kenyon Reynolds, American business executive; Karl Stern, Nazi-persecuted neurologist and author of *Pillar of Fire*; Charles Foucauld, explorer; Eve Lavallière, actress; Fulton

## BOOK REVIEWS

Oursler, journalist and sleuth extraordinary; Manuel Garcia Morente, philosopher and man of action in politics.

The subject which Lelotte presents is not an easy one. The pitfalls of poor taste and worse are everywhere at hand. Not only does he have to deal with people who were formerly Communists, dilettantes, nihilists, or positivists, but there is scarcely a formal religion that is not brought into the picture from Hebraism to modern forms of Protestantism. But as an editor he has chosen his essayists with discernment, knowing as they do their craft and subject and never forgetting the delicacy that is demanded of them. More than once the reader encounters the explanation that nothing is more rash than to presume to portray every aspect of an experience so personal, and so spiritual, as a conversion. Let it be said, too, that the reader will find neither cheap dramatization nor parochial propagandizing. Lelotte and his co-writers have done a difficult task well.

SPIRE PITOU

### Solidarity

*La Barre aux Faucons.* By Louise Bujeaud. Paris: Librairie Stock.

*La Barre aux Faucons*, written by a Protestant, is a beautiful and serious novel whose freshness, humanness, and authentic regional flavor earned for it last year the *Grand Prix Catholique de Littérature*. The author being a woman and a doctor brings a cultivated sensitivity and professional competence to this story of the physical, but more especially of the moral, readaptation of a wounded French aviator shot and left for dead by the firing squad of the occupying German army. The author being a Vendéenne brings to it a native's intimate knowledge of the Poitevin folklore, dialect, and countryside. The earthiness and presence of nature in the novel remind one of *Farrebique*.

Although one may suspect that the psychological study of the rehabilitation of Jean Ferrand was foremost in the author's intention, it is Jean's rescuer, Jacques de Rochard, who emerges as the principal and more solidly portrayed character—this partly because he is more integrated in a race and in a province, which gives him both substance and relief, and partly because, a man of forty, he has had wider and more realistic experience. Jacques de Rochard is a noble who knows his lands and tenants, his bees and fertilizers, his Latin and his Beethoven. Accompanied by his dogs the "master" limps—he too has been wounded and a prisoner—over his domain with its farmhouses, bridges, woods, pastures, gates, vines, cabbages, and fields where the blue flax softens the contour of a dolmen. There is an ancient oven where servants bake clandestine bread. There are rocks and an old well where in secret Jérémie the shepherd boy trains and cajoles his falcons.

Jacques de Rochard himself inhabits the old "Priory," where stained glass, a cloister, carved monks' stalls, and an austere fireplace (the falcon bar is one detail of this massive structure) recall the original inhabitants, but where since the fifteenth century generations of this Huguenot family have lived and died. It is into the silence of the "Priory" that Jacques carries the "dead" aviator. Here in spite of German surveillance he hides him, summons a retired doctor to amputate his right arm, and nurses him back to health. But this is only the beginning.

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Jean Ferrand is a concert violinist who in losing his arm, has lost his art, his livelihood, his former self. This idealist, this quasi-mystic—he is a Catholic—is further shattered on learning that his comrade and co-pilot “talked” and that the fiancée of his dreams is lost to him. Following the old doctor’s advice, Jacques tries to recall his own early loves, to purge himself of cynicism, and to put himself emotionally on a level with his young friend in order to be to him a shield against despair. Jacques also relies on music, classical as well as folk, on physical exercise, and on the manifold chores and administrative tasks of his domain to make Jean whole again. Before he is finished however, a German is murdered on his lands. Jacques de Rochard offers himself as a hostage.

The story ends with an Epilogue consisting of five scenes of which the most impressive is the “master’s” return to Vendée when the war is over. Jean has been in charge during his absence. The place in Jacques’ heart left empty at the death of Nic, a reckless but deeply loved younger brother, is about to be filled with his love for this other “brother.”

The retired doctor, the peasants, the shepherd boy, whom one suspects to be the bastard son of Nic, are beautifully portrayed. The author’s treatment of the German occupants is sober and realistic; no hate pierces through. In this remote province resistance is dignified and uncompromising; obedience is dictated by harsh necessity; but sly evasion of orders and wry humor at the expense of the occupants are the rule.

One might call the style of this novel “dense.” Compact, at times familiar, salty, it makes heavy demands upon the reader. In a brief preface Louise Bujeaud states very simply that the editor called her attention to certain “particularités” which would tax the reader. He suggested the deletion of dialect terms and of the chapter epigraphs (they range from Jaufré Rudel and Marot to Nerval and Apollinaire). But to do this would be to change both the form and substance of her work, for the epigraphs are lyric keys to the chapters—I find they also give a certain universality to the actions of the story. As for the dialect, it is typical of the province and therefore indispensable.

In crowning this novel last year the Catholic jury recognized a sincere and beautiful expression of human solidarity.

The College of St. Catherine

SISTER MARIE PHILIP

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